

Honoré de Balzac

The Devil's Heir *and other tales*
from 'Les Contes Drolatiques'

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first published in April 1945

by John Westhouse (Publishers) Limited

49 Chancery Lane London

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J. Plummer translated *The Devil's Heir*,
The Reproach, *How the Chateau d'Azay came to be built*, *The*
Sermon of the Merry Vicar of Meudon, *Despair in Love*. R. Scott
translated *The Succubus*. J. P. Collas translated *The Three Clerks*
of St. Nicholas, *Concerning a Provost who did not recognise thing*
The Monk Amador who was a glorious Abbot of Turpenay.

Author's Prologue

THIS BOOK IS FOR FINE PALATES. *It is full of the most succulent diversions, spiced to the taste of those remarkable and priceless connoisseurs and toppers to whose ears our worthy compatriot, the everlasting pride of Touraine, François Rabelais, addressed his work. The author would not have the effrontery to aspire to being anything more than a good inhabitant of Touraine and merrily to set down the abundant pleasures of these famous people living in this charming, fertile country which is as rich in cuckolds, wags, and rascals as a place can be, and has made a good contribution to the number of famous men in France: such as the late Courier, of striking memory;*

Verville, author of '*Le moyen de parvenir*,' and others very well known, among whom we will pick out Monsieur Descartes. Now he was a melancholy genius, and would rather discourse of barren cogitations than of wine and sensual enjoyments. He is a man whom all the confectioners and restaurateurs of Tours regard with a holy horror and scorn. They will not hear him talked of, and ask 'Where does he live?' if he is mentioned to them.

Now this book is the product of the happy hours spent by the good old monks of whom there are many traces scattered about our country, as at Grenadières-les-Saint Cyr, in the town of Sacché-les-Azay-le-Ridel, at Marmoutiers, Veretz, Roche Corbon, and in depositories of good tales, which are stored up by old canons and venerable women who knew the good old days when people still laughed, without looking to see if a horse, or frisky foals, came out of your ribs at each burst of laughter, as young women of to-day do, who want to enjoy them-

selves decorously. Which is something as suitable to our gay France as an oil-pot to a Queen's head. But since laughter is a privilege accorded to man alone and as he has sufficient cause for tears with his public liberties without adding to them by books, I thought it was a most patriotic thing to publish a drop of amusement in these times, when boredom falls like a fine drizzle which wets us, eventually soaks us, and dissolves those ancient customs which made of the Re Publique a thing of public amusement for the great number of people. But there are very few, and less every day, of those old pantegruelists who let God and King conduct their own affairs, without lifting a finger to help more than they had to, and being content just to laugh. So that I am very much afraid of seeing these famous relics of the ancient breviary spat upon, befouled, dishonoured, shamed and blamed. I could not easily bear that, for I have and keep very great respect for the keepers of our Gallic antiquities.

You remember, also, you furious critics, scavengers of words, harpies who ruin the intentions and inventions of everyone, that we only laugh as children do, for, as we grow up, laughter dies away and perishes like oil in a lamp. This means that, to laugh, you must be innocent and pure in heart, for if you are not, you purse your lip waggle your jaws, and knit your brows like people who conceal vices and impurity. Then take this book like a group or statue from which the artist cannot omit certain details. He would be a twenty-four carat idiot if he put fig-leaves on them, because such works, like this book, are not intended for convents. Nevertheless I, regretfully, took care to weed out from the manuscripts the old words, still a bit too fresh, which would have shattered the ears, dazzled the eyes, reddened the cheeks and soiled the lips of virgins with male anatomy and the virtuous with three lovers. For you must do something to suit the vices of your age, and a periphrasis is pleasanter than a word!

In fact, we are old, and think that long drawn out trifles are better than the swift follies of our youth, because we can enjoy the taste of them longer. So spare me your curses, and read this at night rather than in the day. And do not give it to virgins, if there still are any, because the book would go up in flames. I will leave you. But I fear nothing for this book, because it is taken from a noble and charming source, from which everything that has issued has been very successful. This is fully proved by the Royal Orders of the Golden Fleece, of the Holy Ghost, of the Garter, of the Bath, and so many other famous things which came from thence, and under whose shelter I place myself.

"So, make merry, my dears, and joyfully read the lot, for the good of your bodies and loins, and may you perish

of an evil growth if you disown me after you have read me!"

These were the words of our good master, Rabelais, to whom we should all take off our hats as a mark of reverence and honour, for he is the prince of all wisdom and all comedy.

The Devil's Heir



There was once a good old canon of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, who lived in a fine house near Saint Pierre-aux-Bocufs in the Cathedral Close. This canon had come to Paris as an ordinary priest, without a penny to his name. But as he was a good-looking man, well set up, and so strong that he could do the work of several men without tiring himself, he became father confessor to a great many ladies, giving absolution to the sad ones, a dose of his medicine to the sick, and some little souvenir to each and all of them. He became so well known for his discretion, his benevolence and other ecclesiastical qualities, that he began to get customers at court. To quiet the jealousy of the ladies' husbands, officials and others, and to lend an air of sanctity to these good and profitable practices, the lady Desquerdes gave him a bone of the holy Saint Victor, and it was by means of this that the canon performed all his miracles. To those who asked questions, the reply was: "He has a bone which cures all ills." Nobody doubted this, because it was not considered proper to be sceptical about holy relics.

The good old canon had the best of all reputations—that of being a brave man beneath his cassock. He lived like a king, raking in plenty of money, and changing the holy water into good wine. Besides this he was a beneficiary under all sorts of wills, testaments and caudicils or codicils as some people wrongly spell it, seeing that the word comes from "cauda," meaning the "tail," as it were, of the legacy. In fact, the good old Longskirts would only have had to say jokingly: "I should like to wear a mitre on my head to keep it a bit warmer," to have been made an archbishop. Out of all the benefits offered to him, he chose only an ordinary canon's stall, so as to keep the profits of the confessional for himself.

But the day came when the brave canon found that he was getting

weak in the back, which was hardly surprising, considering that he was at least sixty-eight years old, and had held a great many confessions. When he thought over all his good deeds, he felt that the time had come when he could give up his work, especially as he had managed to earn about a hundred thousand crowns by the sweat of his brow. And from that day on, he consented to confess ladies of high birth only—and very well he did it. It was said a court that in spite of all the efforts of the best young clerks, there was still no one quite like the Canon of Saint Pierre-aux-Bœufs for really whitening the soul of a lady of quality.

Well, time passed, and the canon became a fine-looking old man of ninety or more. His hair was snow-white, and his hands trembled but he still stood as four-square as a tower. He has done so much spitting without coughing in the past that now he coughed without being able to spit. He no longer got up from his chair as he used to do so often out of the kindness of his heart. But he drank well, ate heartily, spoke very little, and to all intents and purposes seemed to be a living canon of Notre Dame. When people began to notice that he no longer went about, and when they heard stories of the wicked life he had led, which had been current among the common ignorant folk for some time, and when they noticed his silent retirement from the world, the way he still enjoyed perfect health and a youthful old age, and various other things about him, there were some who, to make a stir and try to bring our holy religion into disrepute, put it about that the real canon was long since dead, and that for the past fifty years and more, the Devil had resided in the old priest's body. And really, it did seem to the ladies whom he used to confess that only the Devil with his great heat would have been able to provide all those "alchemic distillations" which they remembered getting from their father confessor whenever they asked for them. They remembered how he had always been ready to oblige them. But since this Devil had undoubtedly been so thoroughly worn out and exhausted by these ladies that he would not now budge from his seat for a twenty-year-old queen, there were some well-disposed and intelligent people, and others who

always argued about everything, the sort of people who will find lice on bald heads, who asked why the Devil continued to look like a canon, still went to church at the time when canons usually go, and even went so far as to sniff the incense, taste the holy water, and a whole lot of other things.

In answer to these heresies, some people said that the Devil obviously wanted to be converted, and others that he went on looking like a canon so as to deceive the real canon's three nephews, *who were also his heirs*, and to keep them waiting until the end of their own lives for the ample provision made for them in his will. They paid him a visit every day, to see if his eyes were still open—and not only were they always open but they were clear, and as bright and sharp as a basilisk's. This pleased them greatly, as they loved their uncle dearly— or so they said. One old lady had a theory that the canon must be the Devil, because one evening when two of his nephews, one a lawyer and the other an army captain, were taking him home from supper with the penitencer, they had no light or lantern of any sort, and they inadvertently made him stumble into a big heap of stones that was lying there in preparation for a statue of Saint Christopher that was going to be put up. At first, the old man had fallen down apparently dead, and his nephews had run to the old lady's house to fetch torches, but when they returned with cries of alarm, they found him standing up straight as an arrow, as if nothing had happened, saying that the penitencer's good wine had fortified him against the shock, and that his bones were made of durable stuff, and had survived worse treatment. His nephews, thinking that he was dead, were quite astonished, and it was then that they first began to realise that it would not be so easy to get rid of their uncle, considering how the stones had failed in this work. They were not wrong in calling him their good uncle, for he was indeed made of good stuff. Some ill-disposed people used to say that the canon had found so many stones in his path that he had decided to stay indoors, to avoid getting the "stone," and that he layed at home for fear of a worse fate.

Whatever the truth of these stories and rumours, the fact remains

that the old canon, whether he was the Devil or not, stayed in his own house and showed no sign of dying, and had three heirs, with whom he lived as closely as with his sciatica, his backache, and other appurtenances of this mortal life. One of his three heirs was the worst soldier born of woman, and indeed, he must have torn his poor mamma badly when he burst out of his shell, arriving as he did complete with teeth and hair. He ate twofold—for the present and the future—and kept several mistresses, inheriting from his uncle the lasting powers, strength and good performance of that which is often of service. When he was fighting in a great battle, he always tried to deal blows without receiving any, which is, and always will be the only problem to be solved in war. But he did not spare himself and in fact, as his only virtue was his bravery, he was captain of a company of lancers, and much esteemed by the Duke of Burgundy who did not trouble himself about what his soldiers did when they were not fighting. This nephew of the Devil was called Captain Cochegrue, and his creditors, the stupid citizens and others, whose pockets he emptied, called him the "Mau-cinge," because he was as wicked as he was strong. In addition to this, he had a humpback, and it would not have done to try to climb on it to get a good view, because he would certainly have run you through.

The second nephew had studied law, and had succeeded through his uncle's influence in being called to the Bar, where he looked after the affairs of the ladies whom the canon had confessed. He was called Pille-grue—a play on his real name, which was Cochegrue, the same as his brother's, the Captain. Pillegrue was a miserable-looking creature, pale-faced and ugly. All the same, he was a bit better than his brother, and had a small measure of fondness for his uncle. But for the last two years or so, there had been a crack in his heart, and drop by drop his gratitude had run out. So that every now and then, when it was cold, he liked to push his feet into his uncle's warm slippers, and taste in advance the pleasures that were to come.

—and his brother, the soldier, felt that they were very hard done because by rights, a whole third part of their uncle's property

would go on his death to a poor relation, a cousin of theirs, son of another of the canon's sisters. This boy, who was not much like his uncle, was a shepherd—just an ordinary peasant living in the country near Nanterre. His two cousins invited him to come to town, and established him in their uncle's house, hoping that he would so annoy the canon by his stupid, clumsy ways and general lack of wit, that he would be cut out of the will. So poor Chiquon, which was the shepherd's name, lived alone with his uncle for about a month, and finding more profit or more amusement in looking after an abbot than in minding his sheep, he made himself the canon's servant, his slave and the prop of his declining years, saying: "God keep you!" when he passed wind, "God save you!" when he sneezed, and "God guard you!" when he belched; running out to see if it was raining, to see where the cat was; keeping quiet, listening, speaking, letting the good man cough right in his face, and admiring him as the best canon in all the world—all quite sincerely and in good faith, not realising that he was licking his boots, as dogs lick their young. The canon, who knew perfectly well what it all meant, snubbed poor Chiquon and kept him continually on the hop. He was always calling for Chiquon, and always telling his other nephews that Chiquon would be the death of him with his clumsiness and stupidity. When he heard this, Chiquon determined to do better, and racked his brains to think how to improve; but as he had a behind like a couple of pumpkins, and was broad-shouldered and large-limbed, and not at all nimble, he was more like a great rollicking bacchante than a delicate zephyr. The poor shepherd, in fact, was a simple soul, and could not alter his nature; so he remained big and fat, and put off getting thin until after he got his inheritance.

One evening the canon was talking about the Devil, and about the terrible torments, tortures and pains that God prepared for the damned. Chiquon listened, opening his eyes as big as saucers, without believing a word of it.

"Aren't you a Christian, then?", asked the canon. "Oh yes," replied Chiquon. "Well then, as there is a paradise for the virtuous,

must there not be a hell for the wicked?" "Yes, but the Devil doesn't come into it. If you had a wicked person in your house who turned everything upside down, wouldn't you throw him out?" "Yes, of course." "Well then, uncle, God would have been very stupid to have left a horrible devil at large in this world, which He has constructed so carefully, just so that he could spoil everything for Him. No, I don't believe in any devil, if God exists. You can rely on that. I should like to see this devil you talk of. I'm not in the least afraid of his claws."

"Ah, if I thought as you do, I should not worry about my young days, when I used to confess as many as ten ladies a day." "You should go on confessing ladies. I'm sure it will be considered in your favour in heaven." "You don't mean it." "Yes, I do." "Aren't you afraid to say that you don't believe in the Devil, Chiquon?" "Not in the very least!" "Something unpleasant will happen to you if you talk like that." "Oh no, I believe God is wiser and less stupid than the scholars make Him out to be, and He will keep me safe from the Devil."

Just then, the other two nephews came in, and realising from the tone of the canon's voice that he did not dislike Chiquon so very much, and that the complaints he made about him were simply tricks to disguise his real affection for him, they looked at each other in astonishment. Then, seeing their uncle laughing, they said to him: "If you make a will, who will you leave the house to?" "Chiquon." "And the rents of the Rue St. Denis?" "Chiquon." "And the fief of Ville Parisis?" "Chiquon." "But," said the Captain in his big voice, "in that case everything will go to Chiquon." "No," answered the canon, smiling. "It won't make any difference how I make my will; the sharpest of you three will get the whole inheritance. I am so close to the next world that I can see your destinies as clear as crystal."

And the cunning canon gave Chiquon a most meaning look, such as a decoy bird might give its prey to lure it into its net. His piercing look served to enlighten the shepherd, who from that moment understood all that was going on, like a girl the morning after her

wedding night. The lawyer and the soldier, who took these words at their face value, made their bows and left the house, thoroughly mystified by the canon's peculiar schemes. "What do you think of Chiquon?" said Pillegreue to Maucinge. "I think—I think—", growled the soldier, "I think that I shall lie in wait for him in the Rue de Jérusalem and cut his head off for him. He can stick it on again if he likes." "Ah," said the lawyer, "but you have a way of dealing with people that can easily be recognised, and people will say: 'Cocheigne must have done this.' No, I would rather invite him to dinner, and then afterwards play the sack game—each get into a sack and see who can move along the best. Then when we'd got him into his sack, we'd throw him into the Seine, and tell him to swim for it."

"This will have to be carefully thought out," said the soldier. "Oh, it's all ready thought out," said the lawyer. "When we've sent our cousin to the devil, we can divide the inheritance between ourselves." "I'm game," said the soldier. "But we must work together like the two legs of one body, because although you may be as fine as silk, I'm as strong as steel, and, listen here, brother, daggers are as good as—"

"Oh yes, that's all agreed. The point is—how shall we do it, the sword or the sack way?" "Good heavens, it isn't as if it were a king that we were going to get rid of. We don't need to make all this fuss over a stupid shepherd. Look—twenty thousand francs out of the inheritance to whichever of us kills him first. I shall say to him quite sincerely: 'Pick up your head!'" "And I shall say: 'Swim, my friend!'" cried the lawyer, grinning all over his ugly face.

Then they parted company, each to have supper, the Captain with his mistress, and the lawyer with the wife of a jeweller whose lover he was.

Who was astonished by all this? . . . Well, Chiquon was! The poor shepherd heard his two cousins planning his death, while they were walking up and down in the Cloze, and talking to each other as loudly as if they were saying their prayers in church. He could

not make out whether it was their words that rose to his ears, or his ears that went down to catch their words.

"Can you hear anything?", he asked the canon. "Yes, I can hear the wood sizzling in the fire." "Well," said Chiquon, "even if don't believe in the devil, I do believe in my guardian angel, St Michael, and I'm going to where he is calling me." "Yes, do, my child," said the canon, "and take care not to get wet or get your head knocked off, because I think I can hear water running, and the beggars in the street aren't always the most dangerous beggars."

Chiquon stared amazed at the canon when he said this, and saw that he was looking his usual bright self, brisk and clear-eyed; but as there was this more pressing matter of the threat of death hanging over him, he thought to himself that he would have plenty of time to admire the canon or to do the opposite on some other occasion, and so off he went to the town as quickly as a woman going to meet her lover.

His two cousins had no motion of the fleeting clairvoyant qualities which shepherds often possess, and they had often talked about their private affairs in front of him as if he had not been there.

One evening, to entertain the Canon, Pillegrue had told him what it was like to be the lover of the wife of the jeweller, whom he had cuckolded so well and truly, affixing such a finely-carved pair of horns to his head. According to him, the lady was a very merry creature, who came boldly to the business, clasping him in a close embrace even while her husband was coming up the stairs; thinking of nothing but love-making, and lapping it up like strawberries and cream; always coquettish and frisky, and as gay as a woman is who has everything in the world she wants; delighting her husband, who loved her as much as he loved his own stomach; subtle as a perfume; and so cleverly had she run her house and her love-affairs for the last five years that she was pointed out as a model wife, and was in the full confidence of her husband, and in possession of the keys of the house, the money and everything.

"When do you play on this sweet flute, then?" asked the canon. "Every evening—and very often I stay all night." "How on earth

do you manage that?" asked the canon. "I'll tell you. I get into a big chest that there is in one of the inner rooms, and when her husband comes in from his friend the draper's house, where he goes to dine every evening, he often does a special service for the draper's wife, my mistress complains of not feeling very well, leaves him to sleep alone, and slips away to be cured of her illness in the room where the chest is. I creep out the next morning, when the jeweller is at his forge, and as the house has two exits, one into the street and one on to the bridge, I can always use the door which her husband does not use, on the pretext that I have come to see him about his lawsuits, which I maintain in health and happiness, never letting them come to an end. I get an income from this cuckolding, seeing that the expenses of the proceedings cost him as much as the horses in his stables. He is very fond of me, as every cuckold should be of the man who helps him to dig, water, cultivate and develop the natural garden of love, and he never does anything without me."

The shepherd began to think over this conversation that he had heard. His wits had been sharpened by his awareness of the danger he was in, and he was protected by that instinct of self-preservation of which every animal has enough to keep him going until the end of his days. So he set off as quick as maybe for the Rue de la Calandre, where the jeweller should then be supping with his companion. When he had knocked at the door, and replied to the question put to him through the grill that he was a messenger with state secrets, he was let into the draper's house. Once inside, he made the jeweller get up from the table, led him into a corner of the room, and coming straight to the point, said to him: "If one of your neighbours had planted a horn on your forehead, and he were given up to you bound hand and foot, would you throw him into the river?"

"Of course I would," said the jeweller, "but I warn you, if you're trying to make a fool of me, I shall give you a good hiding." "No, no," replied Chiquon. "I am one of your friends, and I've come to warn you that every time you have conversed with the draper's wife

here, Pillegrue the lawyer has been with your own wife. If you will come back to your forge, you'll find a good fire there. When you arrive on the scene, the one who looks after your you-know-what and keeps it in good order, will get into the big clothes chest. You go back, and pretend that I've bought the chest from you, and I will be on the bridge with a cart, awaiting your orders."

The jeweller snatched his coat and hat, left Chiquon without a word, and ran to his hole like a poisoned rat. He arrives there and knocks, the door is opened, he runs upstairs and finds two places laid, hears the chest being shut, and meets his wife coming out of the room. Then he says to her: "My dear, there are two places laid."

"Well, darling, aren't there two of us?" "No," says he, "there are three." "Is your friend coming?", she asks, looking towards the stairs, as innocent as you please. "No, I'm talking about the friend in the chest." "What chest?" says she. "Are you in your right mind? Where do you see a chest? Does one usually put friends in chests? Am I the sort of woman who has chests full of friends? Since when have friends been kept in chests? You must be mad to come home babbling about friends and chests. The only friend I know of yours is Mister Cornicille, the draper, and the only chest we've got is the one we keep our clothes in." "Well, my dear," said the jeweller, "a wicked young man came to me to tell me that you have been amusing yourself with our lawyer, and that he was in the chest."

"I can't stand people like that," said she. "They always get things wrong." "There, there, my dear," said the jeweller. "I know that you are a good woman, and I don't want to quarrel with you over a wretched chest. The man who told me that tale is a box-maker, and I'm going to sell him the chest, so that I need never see it again. And in its place he'll sell me two pretty little ones, in which there won't even be room for a child. That will put a stop to all this ill-natured gossip." "I think that's a very good idea," she said, "I'm particularly fond of that chest, and as it happens, there is it at the moment. Our linen is at the wash. It will be

quite easy to have the stupid chest taken away to-morrow morning. And now, let's have supper."

"No, I can't eat until we get rid of that chest." "I can see," she said, "that it will be easier to get the chest out of this room than out of your head." "Hallo there!" the jeweller called out to his smiths and apprentices. "Come down here."

And down they came, almost before you could turn round. Then he gave them their orders as to what they were to do with the chest, and soon this piece of furniture dedicated to love was tumbled across the room; but as it went, the lawyer found himself in an unaccustomed position, with his feet in the air, and he fell over.

"Go on," said the jeweller's wife. "It's only the lid shaking." "No, my dear, it's the hinge." And the chest slid gently down the stairs without any more trouble.

"Hi there, carrier!" shouted the jeweller. Up came Chiquon, whistling to his mules, and the apprentices lifted the chest that was the cause of all this trouble on to the cart.

"Hi! hi!" said the lawyer from inside. "Master, the chest is talking," said one of the apprentices. "In what language?" asked the jeweller, giving him a shrewd kick between two features that luckily were not made of glass. The apprentice tumbled downstairs, and that dissuaded him from any further study of the language of chests.

The shepherd and the jeweller drove the cart up to the water side, taking no notice of the eloquence of the talking chest. Then the jeweller tied some stones to it, and pushed it into the Seine. "Swim, my friend!" cried the shepherd in a sufficiently jeering tone, as the chest turned over, and plunged down like a pretty little duck.

After that, Chiquon continued along the quayside, until he came to the Rue du Port St. Landry, near to the cloisters of Notre De. He noticed one of the houses, recognised the door, and knocked loudly. "Open!" he cried. "Open in the King's name!"

An old man, who was none other than the famous moneylender Versoris, came running to the door when he heard this. "Wh

it?" he asked. "I have been sent by the Provost to warn you to keep a good watch to-night," Chiquon replied. "He himself is going to keep his archers ready. The hunchback who robbed you before has come back again. Keep your weapons handy, if you don't want to lose the rest of your goods."

Then he took to his heels and ran to the Rue des Marmousets, to the house where Captain Cochegrue was feasting with La Pasquerette, the prettiest of the ladies of the town, and, according to the others, the most charmingly perverse of them all. Her eyes went through you like daggers, and she was so attractive to look at that she would have tempted an angel. Besides which she was as bold as any woman who has no other virtue but insolence. Poor Chiquon was extremely embarrassed to have to go into this part of the town. He was afraid that he would not be able to find La Pasquerette's house, or that the two pigeons would have gone to roost, but a good angel arranged everything perfectly for him, and this is what happened. When he reached the Rue des Marmousets, he saw a great many lights at the windows, heads with nightcaps on looking out, ladies of the town, housewives, husbands, young ladies, all of them just out of bed, and looking at each other as if a burglar were being led to his execution by torchlight.

"What is going on?" the shepherd asked a man who had run to his door with a chamber-pot in his hand. "Oh, nothing much. We thought it was the Armagnacs attacking the town, but it's only Maucinge beating La Pasquerette." "Where does she live?" asked Chiquon. "There, that big house with the nightjars carved on the pillars. Can't you hear the noise the servants are making?"

And in fact there was nothing to be heard but cries of "Murder! Help! Murder!", while inside the house the blows rained down, and Maucinge could be heard shouting at the top of his voice: "I'll kill you! Ah, you cry out, do you? You want some money, do you? Take that!" And La Pasquerette was groaning: "Oh! Oh! Help! Murder!" Then there was the sound of a blow from the flat of a sword, and the dull thud of a body falling, and then, dead silence. After that the lights went out, and the servants and guests

and everybody went into the house again. The shepherd had arrived at exactly the right moment, and he went upstairs with the rest of them. But when they saw what a mess the room was in—bottles broken, the curtain torn, and the tablecloth and dishes on the floor—everyone stood still and said nothing.

The shepherd was determined to do what he had come there to do, and he opened the door of La Pasquerette's bedroom, and found her lying stretched out on the carpet, covered with blood, her hair all over the place and her neck twisted. And there was Maucinge looking frightened and crestfallen, not quite knowing what to do next.

"Come, little Pasquerette, don't pretend to be dead. Come, let me put you tidy. You little rascal, dead or alive, you look so pretty lying there in your blood that I shall have to kiss you."

And the cunning fellow picked her up and laid her on the bed, but she fell there stiffly all in a heap, as if she were dead. When he saw this, Maucinge thought it was about time for him to take himself off. But just before he went, he said very artfully: "Poor Pasquerette! How could I have killed such a good girl, and one that I loved so much? But I must have killed her, because I'm sure her pretty breast never hung down like that when she was alive. Why, it looks like a coin at the bottom of a wallet."

This made La Pasquerette open her eyes and bend her head to look at her bosom, which, of course, was as white and firm as ever. So then she demonstrated her return to life by giving the Captain a good smack in the face.

"That'll teach you to talk ill of the dead," she said with a smile.

"But why was he trying to kill you, cousin?" asked the shepherd.

"Why? Because the bailiffs are coming in to-morrow to search everything in the house, and this man, who has no more virtue, was reproaching me for wanting to be agreeable to some gentleman who could have saved me from the law."

"I'll break every bone in your body, Pasquerette!" "Well, Chiquon, whom Maucinge had recognised by now, "if that is troubling you, my friend, I can tell you where you can

of a lot of money." "Where?" demanded the Captain, astonished
"Come here a minute, and let me whisper in your ear. If you
found thirty thousand crowns under a pear tree one night, wouldn't
you stoop down and pick them up to prevent their getting spoilt?"

"Chiquon, I'll kill you like a dog if you're pulling my leg. But I'll
kiss you wherever you like if you can put thirty thousand crowns
in my way—even if I have to kill three men to get them." "There
won't be any need to kill one. Let me tell you how it is. I have a
sweetheart who is the servant of the old moneylender who lives in
the city near our uncle's house. Now I've just heard on good
authority that the dear man left for the country this morning. But
before he left, he buried a bushel of gold under a pear tree in his
garden. He thought that no one but the angels had seen him, but
my girl, who had a bad attack of toothache and happened to be
standing at her garret window, saw the old man without meaning
to, and chattered to me about it out of fondness. Now if you
promise to give me a good share, I'll let you get onto my shoulders,
so that you can climb on to the top of the wall, and climb down the
pear tree just the other side. Now do you say I'm a fool and a
brute?"

"No, indeed, you're a most loyal cousin and an honest man, and if
ever you want to get rid of anyone, I'll be there, ready to kill even
one of my own friends for you. I'm no longer your cousin, I'm
your brother. Now then, sweetheart," he shouted to La Pasquer-
ette, "put the tables straight. Wipe up your blood. It belongs to
me, and I'll pay you for it handsomely and give you a hundred
times as much of mine as I spilt of yours. Come on, make the best
of it, cheer up, put your dress straight. I want you to laugh and
be happy. See to the stew, and let us begin our evening again
where we left off. I'll make you finer than a queen to-morrow.
This is my cousin, and I want to entertain him well, even if it means
turning the house upside down . . . Come, let's start eating."

So in less time than it takes a priest to say his *Dominus vobiscum*,
the whole dovecot changed from crying to laughing just as quickly
and changed from laughing to crying. It is only in places like

these that people make love with blows, and such violent scenes go on. But these are things that well brought up ladies will never understand.

Captain Cochegrue was as happy as a hundred boys let out of school, and made his cousin drink a great deal. He swilled it all down country fashion, pretended to be drunk, and said all sorts of wild things—he would buy up the whole of Paris the next day, he would lend the king a hundred thousand crowns, he would roll in gold. In the end, he talked so much nonsense that the Captain was afraid he would let the cat out of the bag, and, thinking he was quite muddled enough in his wits, he led him outside, meaning to rip him open to see if it was not a sponge he had in his stomach, as he had just swallowed down a great jugful of good Suresnes wine. They went along arguing about various theological subjects, which became very involved, and finally rolled quietly up against the wall of the moneylender's garden. Cochegrue climbed up on to Chiquon's broad shoulders and jumped on to the pear tree, like a man who is used to storming cities. But Versoris was watching for him, and slashed at him so hard with his sword three times that his head fell off—but not before he had heard Chiquon say, quite distinctly: "Pick up your head, my friend!"

So Chiquon's virtue was at last receiving its just reward; but now he thought it would be best to go back to the Canon's house, reflecting, as he went, how by the grace of God the question of the inheritance had been most methodically simplified. So he made his way as quickly as he could to the Rue St. Pierre-aux-Boeufs, and was soon sleeping like a new-born babe, no longer knowing the meaning of the words "first cousin." Next morning he got up at sunrise, as all good shepherds do, and went into his uncle's room to ask if he had slept well, if he still had a cough, and so on. But the old servant told him that when the canon had heard the bells of St. Maurice, the patron saint of Notre Dame, ringing for matins, he had gone out of reverence to the Cathedral, where all the Chapter were going to breakfast with the Bishop of Paris.

"The canon must be mad to go out like that," said Chiquon. "He'll

catch cold, get a chill or get cold in his feet. It's enough to him. I'd better light a big fire for him to warm him when he back." And he ran into the room where the Canon usually sat. There, to his great astonishment, he found him sitting in his chair. "There! What did she tell me, that fool of a woman knew you had far more sense than to be shivering in your state this time of day."

The canon never answered a word. The shepherd, who, like people of a reflective turn of mind, was a man of great good sense, knew quite well that old men sometimes have strange whims and fancies and mutter to themselves; so out of respect for the Canon's private meditations, he went and sat down some distance away from him, waiting until he had finished. He did not say anything but he could not help noticing the length of his uncle's nails--they were as long as cobblers' awls. And then when he was looking at his uncle's legs, he saw that the flesh was so crimson that it reddened his breeches, and glowed like fire through his stockings. "He must be dead!" thought Chiquon.

At that moment the door of the room opened, and there was the canon again come back all cold from church. "My dear uncle, you must be mad!" said Chiquon. "How can you be coming in at the door when you are already sitting in your chair by the fire? And there can't be two canons like you in the world!" "At Chiquon, there was a time when I should very much have liked to be in two places at once. But such is not the fate of man, he would be too happy! You're seeing things. There's only one of me here!" Then Chiquon turned to look at the chair, and saw that it was indeed empty; and much astonished, as you can imagine, he went up to it, and found on the seat a little heap of cinders that smelt of sulphur. "Ah," he said, "I can see that the Devil has been very good to me. I shall pray to God for him."

And then he told the canon all about how the Devil had amused himself playing at being providence, and had helped him to get his wicked cousins. The canon was full of admiration, and

approved of it all, for he still had plenty of sense left, and had often seen things that were to the Devil's credit. The good old priest said that there was always as much good in evil as there was evil in good, and that therefore people should not worry too much about the next world—which, of course, was a gross heresy that has often been disproved.

And that is how the Chiquon family became rich, and with the fortune that their ancestor amassed were able to help build the bridge of St. Michel, where you can see that the Devil cuts a very good figure beside the angels, in memory of the adventure related in these true chronicles.



The Repro

The lovely laundress of Portillon-lez-Tours, who is also the heroine of another of these Droll Stories, was as full of mischief as six priests or three women at least. But she had no lack of admirers—they were always round her, like bees round a honeypot.

One evening, an old silk-dyer, who lived in Tours, in a most luxurious mansion in the Rue Montfumier, was riding home from his country cottage in La Grenadière on the pretty St. Cyr hillside, and passed through Portillon on his way to the Tours Bridge. It was a warm evening, and he was quite overcome by desire when he caught sight of the lovely laundress sitting on her doorstep. He had had his eye on this pretty girl for some time past, and now when he saw her, he made up his mind then and there to get her for his wife. Not long after, she left her laundering to become the dyer's wife and take her place in the society of Tours. She had fine linen and lace and furniture in plenty, and she was not too unhappy, in spite of the dyer, because she knew just how to manage him.

The dyer had a friend who was a manufacturer of machines for silk-spinning, and this friend was short and hunchbacked, and spiteful. He said to the dyer on his wedding day: "It was a good idea to get married, my friend—we shall have a pretty wife"—and various other sly remarks of the kind that people make at weddings.

As a matter of fact, the hunchback had been trying to make up to the dyer's wife, but she had a natural aversion to deformed people, and laughed in his face when he made advances to her, and made fun of the various machines and contraptions that he had in his shop. However, the hunchback would not take No for an answer, and became so pressing in his expressions of love that she determined to cure him of it once for all by playing a trick on him.

One evening, when he had been pestering her, she told her lover to come to the side door of the house, and at about midnight she would let him in. This, mind you, was on a raw winter's night; the Loire runs along the end of the Rue Montfumier, and winds as sharp as needles blow down this narrow part of the river even in summer. The good hunchback, well wrapped up in his cloak, came there as arranged and walked up and down to keep warm until the appointed hour. By midnight he was half frozen, fidgeting about like thirty-two devils caught in a stole, and he had almost decided to forego his pleasure, when he suddenly saw a dim light through the cracks in the shutters moving along and coming down towards the side door.

"Here she is at last!" he said. And he was warmed by hope again. He got very close to the door and heard a little voice. "Are you here?" asked the dyer's wife. "Yes!" "Cough, so that I can tell." The hunchback duly coughed. "It isn't you." Then the hunchback said in his normal voice: "What do you mean, it isn't me? Don't you recognise my voice? Open the door!" "Who's here?" said the dyer, opening his window. "There, now you've woken up my husband who came back from Amboise unexpectedly this evening. . . ."

The dyer, seeing by the light of the moon that there was a man standing in his doorway, must needs throw a good big jug of cold water over him, and shout out: "Stop thief!" so that the hunchback had to make off as quick as he could. But in his fright he did not notice the chain stretched across the end of the road, and he fell into the common sewer, which the Town Council had not at that time replaced by a sluice to divert the dirt into the Loire. He thought his last hour had come when he fell into this bath, and he cursed the lovely Tascherette which was the nickname the people of Tours had given the dyer's wife, his name being Taschereau.

Carandas, for that was the name of the manufacturer of machines for weaving, spinning, spooling and winding the silk, was not so infatuated as to believe that the dyer's wife had been entirely innocent, and he swore a terrible revenge against her. But a few days

fish has sunshine at the bottom of a river. But he had the music of love, the sighs of the dyer and the pretty talk of Tascherette to entertain him. At long last, when he thought his friend must be asleep, the hunchback started to try to pick the lock of the chest, "What's that?" said the dyer. "What's the matter, darling?" asked his wife, putting her nose over the counterpane. "I can hear something scratching," said he. "It must be the cat, we shall have rain to-morrow," replied his wife.

Then the dyer put his head back on the pillow, when he had been smoothed down by his wife.

"There, my dear, you're a very light sleeper. It's no good trying to make a proper husband of you. There, be good now. Oh, but, daddy, you've got your nightcap on all crooked. Put it straight, my poppet—you must look pretty even when you're asleep. Now, are you comfortable?" "Yes." "Are you asleep?" she asked, kissing him. "Yes."

In the morning the dyer's wife went very quietly to let the manufacturer out of the chest, and out he came, as pale as death. "Air! Air! Give me air!" he cried. And he rushed off, cured of his love, and with as much hatred in his heart as you can fill your pocket full of buck-wheat.

Well, the hunchback left Tours, and went to the town of Bruges, where he had been invited by some merchants, to arrange some machinery for making hauberks.

Carandas had Moorish blood in his veins, for he was descended from a Saracen who had been left for dead on the field after the great battle between the Moors and the French in the commune of Ballan, known as Charlemagne's country, where nothing will grow now because of the infidels and unbelievers buried there—where the grass disagrees even with the cows. Because of his Moorish blood, Carandas never got up or went to bed without cudgelling his brains how he could get his revenge. He was always thinking about it, and would hardly have been satisfied by anything less than the death of the lovely laundress of Portillon. Often and often he said to himself: "I'd eat her flesh. Yes, I'd cook one of her breasts, and chew it up without any sauce."

It was a good full-bodied hatred, a cardinal hatred, an old mai-wasp's hatred. It was all hates rolled into one, and that one boiled down, and reduced, and concentrated itself into a diabolical quintessence of poisoned ill-feeling, heated on the hottest fires of hate. It was, in fact, a master hate.

Well, one fine day, Carandas returned to Touraine with a good deal of money, which he had made in Flanders from his secret inventions. He bought a fine house in the Rue Montfumer, which is still standing to this day, and is always stared at by the passerby because of the curious figures carved on its walls.

Carandas came back full of hatred, and he found some considerable changes in his friend the dyer's house, for he now had two fine children, who, as it happened, bore no resemblance to either father or the mother. But as children have to look like someone, there are always people who detect a resemblance to some relation—when the children are beautiful, that is! So, in this case, to make everything all right, the husband discovered that the two little boys looked like an uncle of his, who used to be a priest at Notre Dame de l'Egrignolles. But for other less biassed observers these two children were the little living images of a handsome young priest from Notre Dame la Riche, a famous parish between Tours and Le Plessis.

Now, you must understand one thing and get it into your head—and if this fundamental truth is the only thing that you manage to extract, squeeze and obtain from this book, you can count yourself lucky—it is this: that a man can never do without his nose, in other words, he will always be snotty—that is to say, he will always be human, and so in all the ages to come, he will go on laughing and drinking, and finding himself no better and no worse off, and he will go on doing the same things. What I am trying to get into your head is that this two-legged soul will always accept as true those ideas which flatter his passions, encourage his hates, and further his love affairs. That is where logic comes from!

So it was that on the very first day that Carandas set eyes on his friend's children saw the handsome priest, the beautiful wife of

he dyer, and Tachereau himself, all sitting at table, and saw how, in preference to himself, the best bit of lamprey was given by Tascherette to her friend, the priest, with a special look, then said to himself:

"My old friend is a cuckold, his wife sleeps with the little father confessor, and the children were begotten with his holy water. Well, 'll show them that hunchbacks have got something more than other men."

Which was true—as true as it is that Tours has always stood with its feet, as it were, in the Loire, like a pretty girl who bathes herself and plays with the water, flicking it about and patting it with her white hands. For this town is more smiling, happy, loving, fresh, lowery and fragrant than any other town in the world. No other town is fit even to comb her hair or fasten her belt. And if you go there, you'll find a lovely place in the centre of the town, a delightful street, with people always walking up and down, where there is always wind, sun, shade and rain, and love. Well, laugh, if you like, but go and look. It is a street that is never the same, but it is always royal, imperial and patriotic—it has two pavements, and is open at each end and nice and wide, so that there is never any need to shout "Out of the way!" It is a street that shows no signs of wear, and it leads to the Abbey of Grand-Mont and to a trench, which fits in very well with the bridge, at the end of which there is a fine fair-ground. It is a well-paved street, well built and well kept, clean as a whistle, and full of people, but quiet at certain times, a coquette that wears a nightcap of pretty blue tiles at night. It is, in fact, the street where I was born. It is a queen of streets, suspended between heaven and earth. It has fountains in it, and everything else calculated to make it celebrated among streets. It is the one and only street in Tours. If there are others, they are dark and damp and narrow and twisting, and they all acknowledge the supremacy of this street, which lords it over them all.

Well, where was I? I can tell you, once you get into this street, you never want to come out again, because it is so pleasant there. But I wanted to pay my homage to the street of my birth by this pane-

gyric, which comes straight from my heart. The only things that you will not find there, are statues of Descartes and of my not master, Rabelais—but they are unknown to the people of the country.

Well, to go on—when Carandas returned from Flanders, he was asked out a great deal by his old friend, the dyer, and by all the others who liked him for his jokes and stories and funny saying. The hunchback seemed to have got over his former infatuation and was quite friendly to Tascherette and to the priest, and kissed the children. When he was alone with the dyer's wife, he reminded her of the night in the clothes chest and the night in the sewer, and said to her: "Yes, what fun you used to make of me!" "Well, it was your own fault," she replied laughing. "If you had really loved me and had let me go on chaffing and fooling you and making fun of you a little longer, you might have ended up by making an impression on me like all the others!"

Carandas laughed at this, but he was really seething with fury inside. Then he noticed the chest in which he had nearly suffocated, and his fury increased even more—all the more so, because the lovely dyer's wife had become lovelier than ever, like all those who stay young by bathing in the waters of youth, which are none other than the sources of love.

To get his revenge, the manufacturer studied how the cuckoldom of his friend was carried on, because there are as many different ways of managing this business as there are different houses. And although all love affairs are much alike, in the same way as all men are alike, it has been proved beyond question that, luckily for women, each love affair has its own particular idiosyncrasies, and that although there is nothing so much like a man as a man, yet there is also nothing so different from a man as a man. This either confuses everything, or else it accounts for the thousand and one different fancies of women, who take infinite pain and pleasure—more of one than the other—to seek out the best men.

But why should we blame them for their experiments, and changes of mind and contradictions? Why, Nature is always twisting and

like the gallant, craven heroes of romance so often celebrate Master Ariosto.

Then the manufacturer went to the old dyer, who was still in with his wife, and still imagined that he was the only one to ha finger in her pie.

"Ah, good evening, my friend," says Carandas to Taschereau. Taschereau raises his hat. Then the manufacturer proceeds to divulge the whole story of clandestine love, pours forth a torrent of words and gets the dyer on the raw every time.

When he could see that he was ready to kill his wife and the priest too, Carandas said to him: "My good friend, I brought a poison sword back from Flanders with me, which immediately kills anybody that it touches, even if it is only a scratch. You have only to touch your wife and her lover with it, and they will die." "Quick let us go and find her," cried the dyer.

The two of them rushed to the hunchback's house to fetch the sword, and set off into the country. "But shall we find them in bed?" said Taschereau. "Just you wait," answered the hunchback, hugging himself with delight.

But the cuckold did not have to wait long to catch the two lovers. His pretty wife and her beloved were engaged in trying to catch that elusive little bird in the lovely lake that you know of; and they were laughing, and trying, and laughing again.

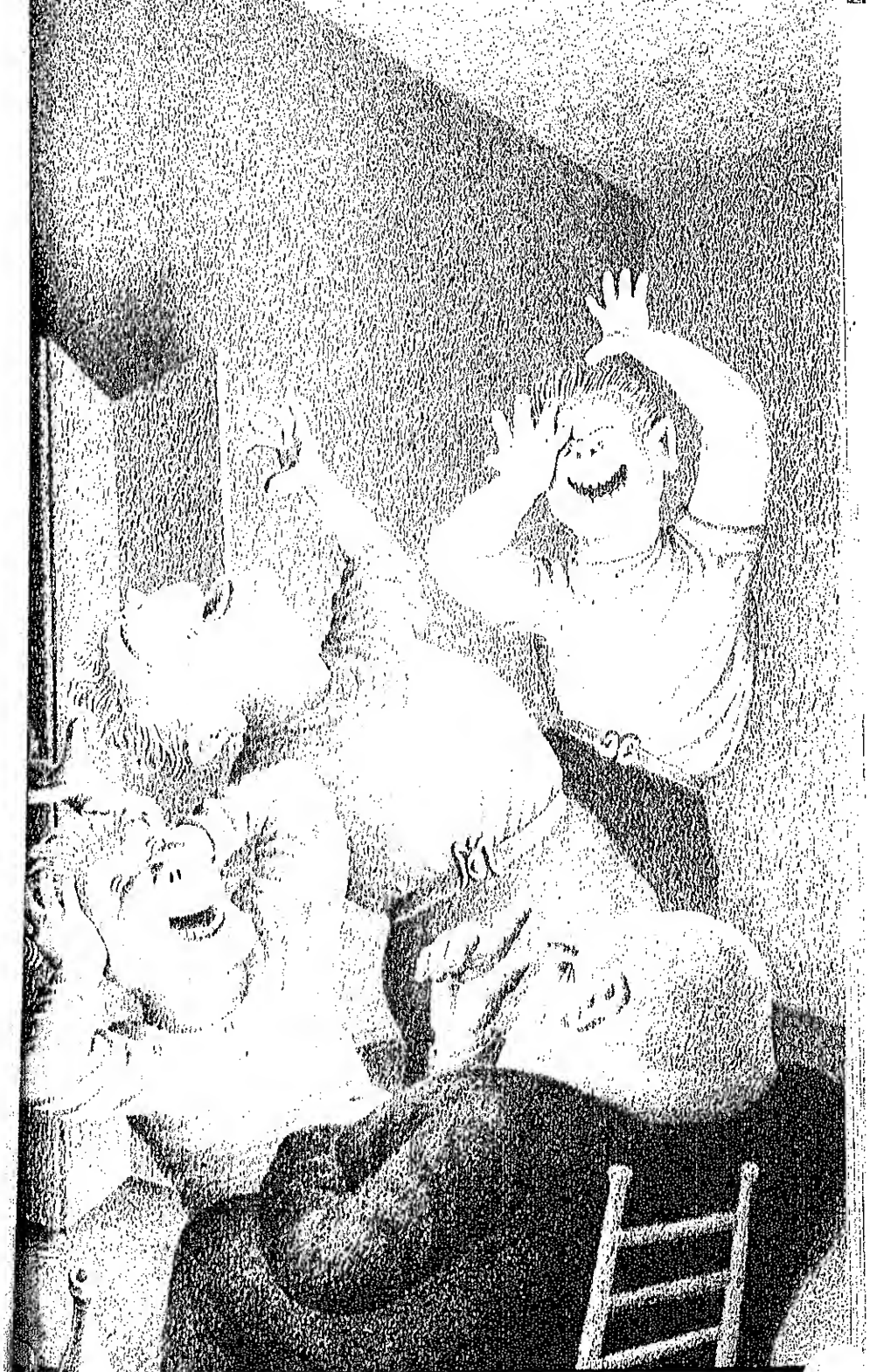
"Ah, my darling," Tascherette was saying, hugging him to her as if to try to imprint him on her body, "I love you so much I'd like to eat you up. Or better still, I'd like to have you in my skin that you'd never leave me." "There's nothing I'd like better," answered the priest, "but you can't have me all at once. You must be content with just a bit."

It was at this delightful moment that her husband appeared, carrying the sword all drawn and ready. The lovely dyer's wife, who knew her husband well, saw at once that it was all up with her beloved, the priest. But she flung herself on her husband, half-naked as she was, with her hair all dishevelled, beautiful in her

shame, but even more beautiful in her love, and said to him : "Stop ! Stop ! Would you kill the father of your children?"

The good dyer was so dazzled by the paternal grandeur of cuckoldom and perhaps by the fire of his wife's eyes, that he let his sword fall on to the foot of the hunchback, who was just behind him, and so killed him.

And the moral of that is : Never be spiteful.



*The three Clerks
of Saint Nicholas*

At one time there was no better place in Tours for good fare than the Hostelry of the Three Barbels; for the landlord, reputed a very prince of eating-house keepers, went out to cook wedding banquets as far away as Chatellerault, Loches, Vendôme, and Blois. This man was a thoroughly tough old fellow at his craft; he never lighted his lamps by day, knew how a flint could be skinned, charged for fur, feather, and skin, saw to everything himself, was hardly ever to be caught whistling for his money, and for a farthing less than the bill, would have tackled anyone, even a prince. At the same time he was a good host, drinking and laughing with the guzzlers, and always hat-in-hand before those who came armed with plenary indulgences in the form of a *Sit Nomen Domini benedictum*; he would run these fellows into expense, and, if necessary, prove to them by sound argument that the wines were costly, and that, do what you might, since nothing was given away in Touraine, everything had to be bought, and therefore paid for. Indeed, if he could have done it without shame, he would have reckoned so much for the good air, and so much for the scenery.

In this way he built up a good business with other people's money, became as round as a barrel, barded with fat; and people called him *Sir*.

On the occasion of the last fair three young fellows, apprentices in the art of pettifoggery, who had more stuff in them to make thieves than saints, and who knew very well how far you could go without getting caught in the hangman's noose, took it into their heads to have a good time and to live at the expense of certain booth-keepers and others. These pupils of the devil accordingly gave the slip to the attorneys under whom they were studying the old black books of law in the town of Angers, and came first to lodge at the Hostelry of the Three Barbels, where they asked for the best rooms, turned

everything upside down, turned their noses up at everything, bespoke all the lampreys in the market, and proclaimed themselves traders in a large way, who did not trail their merchandise behind them, but travelled by themselves. The landlord, for his part, trotted about, turned his spits, drew the best wine, and prepared a real advocate's dinner for these three fuss-pots, who had already cost him a hundred crowns' worth of bother, although, properly squeezed, they would not even have yielded the twelve sous which one of them was jingling about in his wallet. But if they had no money at all they were certainly not short of cunning, and all three conspired to play their rôle like thieves at a fair. It was a farce in which there was food and drink, at stake, since for five days they flung themselves upon all sorts of provisions in such a way that a troop of soldiers would have spoiled less than they gobbled up.

These three pettifoggers would go down to the fair after lunch, big-bellied with drink and victuals, and there they would do as they liked with anyone who was silly enough to believe them, robbing, filching, gambling, losing; taking down placards and sign-boards and changing them about, giving the knick-knack dealers' to the goldsmith, and the goldsmiths' to the cobbler, throwing dust into the shops, making the dogs fight, cutting the bridles of tethered horses, letting cats loose upon the people gathered together; calling "Stop thief!", or saying to everyone: "Are you not Mr. Tween-buttocks of Angers?" Then they would go pushing in the crowd, making holes in the sacks of corn, looking for their handkerchiefs in ladies' purses, lifting up their skirts, weeping, looking for a jewel that had been dropped, and saying to them: "Ladies, it's in a hole somewhere!" They led children astray, jostled the stomachs of those who were gaping up at the sky, pilfered, fleeced, and wrecked everything. In short, the devil himself would have been well-behaved, compared with these benighted students, who would have got themselves hanged if they had had to act like honest men; as well have expected charity from two angry litigants! They would leave the fair-field, not tired, but weary of their misdeeds, and would come back to dine until vespers, when they began their pranks

again by torchlight. And so, after the fair-folk, they would set upon the harlots, to whom, by tricks innumerable, they gave no more than they received, according to Justinian's maxim : *Quicumque in tribuere*, "Give every man his juice." Then, chaffing them when the deed was done, they would say to these poor wenches : "We are right and you are wrong."

Finally, at supper-time, having no victims to harry, they would pitch into each other; or, for further sport, they complained to the landlord of the flies, pointing out that elsewhere innkeepers kept them tethered so that persons of quality should not be disturbed. However, towards the fifth day, which, in cases of fever, is the critical day, the landlord, never having seen the golden gleam of a crown piece among his guests, though he had kept his eyes wide open, and knowing that if all that glitters were gold it would be cheaper, began to knit his brows and to do the will of these big-business people only half-heartedly. He was afraid that they would give him a bad deal, and so he resolved to sound the depth of their wallets. When they saw this, the three clerks, self-assured as a provost hanging his man, told him to serve them a good supper quickly, since they were going to leave at once. Their merry faces dispelled the landlord's suspicious. Thinking that rascals without money would certainly look solemn, he prepared them a supper fit for a canon, even hoping that they would get drunk, so that he might be able to clap them into gaol without a struggle if the need should arise. Not knowing how to make their escape from the room, in which they were about as much at ease as fish upon straw, the three companions ate and drank in a frenzy, looking to see how the windows were placed, and watching for a chance to decamp, but finding no way, good or bad. Cursing everything, one wanted to go and undo his breeches in the fresh air because of a colic, the next to fetch a doctor to the third who did his best to faint. The cursed landlord kept straying from his ovens to the room, and from the room back to his ovens, watching these fellows, coming a step forward to receive what was owing to him, taking two steps back so as not to be jostled by these gentlemen, in case they should be

real gentlemen, and behaving like a good-natured, prudent landlord who likes his money and dislikes blows. But under the guise of assiduous attention to their wants, he kept an ear in the room and a foot in the courtyard, fancied they were always calling him, came at the slightest sound of laughter, displayed his face as if it were the bill, and said each time, "Gentlemen, what is your pleasure?" They would have liked to answer this question by plunging his spit ten inches down his throat; for, he seemed to know well enough what they wanted, considering that, for the sake of twenty crowns in hard cash, each one of them would have sold a third of his hope of heaven. You can imagine it,—the benches under them seemed like gridirons, their feet itched a great deal, and their bottoms were getting warm. The landlord had already put the pears, cheese and preserves under their noses; but they, sipping away, munching sideways, looked at each other to see whether one of them would find some quibbling dodge in his bag; and all began to take their pleasure rather woefully. The most cunning of the three clerks, who was a Burgundian, smiled as he saw the hour of reckoning upon them, and said: "The case must be adjourned for a week, gentlemen," as if he had been in Court.

The two others, despite the danger, promptly laughed.

"How much do we owe?" asked he who had the aforesaid twelvence in his belt. He was shaking them as if he thought he would make them bring forth young by such furious motion. A Picard was he, choleric as the devil, and ready to take offence at anything so that he might heave the landlord through the window in all security of conscience. So he spoke these words haughtily, as if he had property worth ten thousand doubloons lying in the sun.

"Six crowns, gentlemen, . . ." answered the landlord, holding out his hand. "I shall not, Viscount, accept entertainment from you alone," said the third student, who was an Angevin, sly as a woman in love. "Nor I!" said the Burgundian. "Gentlemen! gentlemen!" the Picard retorted, "you are joking. It is I who am at your service!" "Good heavens!" cried the Angevin, "you would surely not let us pay three times. Our host would not allow it." "Well,"

said the Burgundian, "whichever of us tells the worst tale sha square up with the host." "Who will be judge?" asked the Picard sheathing his twelve sous. "Mine host, of course! He must know all about it, since he is a man of fine taste," said the Angevin. "Now then, Master Cook, sit you down there, let us drink, and lend us both your ears. The court is in session."

Thereupon the landlord sat down, but not until he had poured himself an ample drink.

"My turn first!" said the Angevin. "I'll begin. In our duchy of Anjou the country-folk are very faithful devotees of our holy Catholic religion; and not one would give up his portion of paradise for lack of doing penance or killing a heretic. Indeed, if a Huguenot minister were to pass that way he would soon find himself underground, without even knowing what foul death had struck him. Well, one evening, a good man from Jarzé returning home after saying his vespers by boozing away at the sign of the Pinecone where he had left his understanding and his memory, fell into the water-channel of his own pond, and thought he was in his bed. A neighbour of his, whose name is Godenot, spotted him already caught in the frost, for it was mid-winter, and said to him jestingly: 'Hi! Whatever are you waiting for there?' 'The thaw,' said the old toper, seeing himself caught in the ice. "Then Godenot, like a good Christian, dislodged him from his mortise and opened the door of the house for him, out of his deep respect for wine, which is lord of this country. The good man went straight home and lay down in the bed of his servant, who was a young and comely maid; and, old labourer that he was, fortified by wine, he set to work upon her warm furrow, thinking he was with his wife, and relieved her of what maidenhead he found left in her. Now, hearing her husband, the wife began to scream like a thousand devils; and by these hair-raising cries the labourer was advised that he was on the wrong road to salvation, which grieved the poor man more than I can tell. "Ah!" said he, 'God has punished me for not attending vespers in church.'

"He then found excuses, as best he could, in the wine, which had fuddled the memory of his codpiece; and, coming back to his own bed, he muttered on to his good wife that not for his best cow would he have had this misadventure upon his conscience. 'It's nothing!' said the wife to her husband, as, the girl having told her that she had been dreaming of her sweetheart, she gave her a good beating to teach her not to sleep so soundly. But the dear man, mindful of the enormity of his case, wailed away on his pallet and wept tears of wine for fear of God.

'My dear,' said she, 'go straight to confession in the morning, and let us hear no more about it.'

The good man trotted off to confession, and in all humility told his story to the rector of the parish, who was a good old priest, fit, up and down, to be a slipper on the foot of God. "Mistakes don't count," he said to his penitent, 'you will fast to-morrow, and be absolved.' 'Fast!—with pleasure!' said the good man. "That does not mean going without drink." "Oh!" answered the priest, 'you will drink water, and eat nothing at all save a quarter of bread and an apple.' The good man, who had no confidence in his understanding, went back home, repeating to himself the penance prescribed. But, having faithfully begun with 'a quarter of bread and an apple,' he arrived home saying 'a quarter of apples and a loaf.'

Then, to purify his soul, he set about accomplishing his fast; and, his good wife having taken a loaf from the bin and unhooked some apples from the beam, he sorrowfully performed the part of Cain. As he heaved a sigh on reaching the last mouthful of bread, not knowing where to put it, since he was full up to the chin, his wife hinted out to him that God did not desire the death of a sinner, and that, for want of putting a last morsel of bread in his belly he could not be taken to task for having put his thing a mere moment grass. 'Hold your tongue, woman!' said he. 'Though I should choke, yet must I fast!'

'I've paid my share. It's your turn, Viscount . . ." added the pagevin, with a knowing wink at the Picard.

"The mugs are empty," said the landlord. "Ho, there! Wine!"
"Let us drink," cried the Picard. "Moistened letters run more quickly. Thereupon he gulped down his glassful so that not a drop remained, and, after coughing prettily like a preacher, spoke as follows. "You know how our little Picard wenches, before they set up housekeeping, are accustomed, honestly to gain their clothes, chests, plates and dishes, in short, all the utensils needed for married life. To this end they go into service in Péronne, Abbeville, Amiens, and other towns, where they become chamber-maids, wash up glasses and wipe dishes, fold linen, carry in the dinner and a that they can carry. Then they all marry, as soon as they have a certain competence, besides that which they naturally bring to their husbands. They are the best housewives in the world, because they know well what service means, and understand everything else thoroughly. One from Azonville, the place of which the lordship is my inheritance, having heard speak of Paris, where the people would not as much as stoop to pick up six francs, and where one could subsist for a whole day by passing in front of eating-houses merely sniffing the air, so fattening it was, contrived to go there in the hope of bringing back the value of an alms-box at church. By dint of much slogging she got there, equipped only with a pocket full of emptiness. There, at St. Denis' Gate, she fell in with a gang of old soldiers, posted for a time on vedette duty because of disturbances caused by the Protestants who seemed to be slipping out to their assemblies. The sergeant, seeing this hounded produce on its way in, stuck his felt hat on one side, cocked the feather aright, turned up his moustache, cleared his throat, put on a fierce look, placed his hand on his hip, and stopped this Picard maid, as if to see whether she were properly pierced, girls being forbidden to enter Paris otherwise. Then he asked her, like a wag but with a serious air, with what intention she came, as if he thought she was out to take the keys of Paris by storm. To which the artless wench replied that she was seeking a good situation in which to serve, and that she had no thought of wrong-doing but only desired to earn.

"'Good luck to you, my gossip,' said the wag. 'I am a Picard and will get you taken in here, where you will be treated as a queen would often like to be, and you will earn many a good thing by it.'

He then led her to the guard-house, where he told her to sweep the floors, carefully skin the pot, stoke the fire, and see to everything; adding that she would have thirty Paris sous for each man if their service pleased her. Now as the squad was to be there for a month she would gain fully ten crowns, and on its departure she would find new-comers who would get on admirably with her; and by this honest occupation she would take back home a lot of money and many a present from Paris. The girl promptly swept out the room, cleaned everything up, and prepared the meal so well, singing away like a nightingale, that the soldiers found their den looking like a Benedictine refectory. So, all being content, each one gave their good chambermaid a sou. Then, having fed her well, they gave her the bed of their commandant, who was in town with his lady, and they petted and caressed her after the manner of philosophical soldiers, i.e., soldiers who like what is good. When he was snugly ensconced between the sheets, these revellers of ours, to avoid brawling and quarrelling, drew lots for their turns; then they got into single file, to move nicely into the Picard lass, all of them warm with passion, saying not a word, good-soldiers all, and each one taking at least six score sous' worth. Though this unaccustomed work was rather hard going for her, the poor girl exerted herself as best she could, and therefore did not shut an eye the whole night long. In the morning, seeing the soldiers fast asleep, she made herself scarce, glad to come away without a scratch on her belly after bearing so heavy a load; and, though slightly fatigued, she reached the open country across the fields with her thirty sous. Later, on the road to Picardy, she met one of her friends, who, like her, wished to try service in Paris, and was hurrying there all excited. This girl stopped her and questioned her as to conditions.

'Oh, Perrine, don't go! You'd need an iron backside, and even then it would soon get worn out,' she confided to her."

"It's your turn, you fat Burgundian belly," said the Picard, giving his neighbour a hearty smack. "Spit out your story or pay
"By the queen of chitterlings!" answered the Burgundian. "I only know stories of the Court of Burgundy, and they are not legal tender outside our country." "But, good heavens, are we not in your own land Bauffremont?" exclaimed the other, pointing at the empty inn.
"Then I shall tell you an adventure that is well-known in the country. It happened at the time when I was in command there, and it has been set down in writing. There was a sergeant of the name named Franc-Taupin, who was a proper old sackful of unpleasantness, always grumbling and quarrelling, freezing everything in his look, and never cheering along the men that he led off to the wars, hanged with a joke or two; the sort of man who would find fault with a bald head, and faults in God Himself. This same Taupin, lost by all and sundry, took to himself a wife; and by great luck on a soft-natured as onion peel fell to his lot. She, being aware of her husband's fault-finding disposition, took greater pains to make him happy at home than another would have taken to make a husband a cuckold. But though she made it her delight to obey him in all things, and would even have tried to excrete gold for the sake of peace, if God had permitted it, this wicked man stayed sullen the time, and no more spared his wife blows than does a debauchee promises to the bailiff's men. As this unpleasant treatment went despite the poor woman's care and hard work, she was constrained not getting used to it, to bring it to the notice of her parents, and they arranged to come and see her. When they arrived, they were told by the husband that his wife had no sense, that she only annoyed him, and made life unbearable for him; that sometimes she would wake him from his first sleep, and sometimes not condescend to open the door for him, leaving him in the drizzle and the frosts, and that nothing was ever in order in the house. His fastenings had no buttons to them and his laces no tabs, the linen was left to moulder, the wine turned sour, the woodwork was damp, the beams creaked inopportunely. In short, everything was going wrong. To

this flood of falsehood the woman answered by pointing to the clothes and the rest, all in a good state of repair. Then the sergeant said he was very ill-used; he never found his dinner ready, or if it was, there was not a drop of fat in the broth, or the soup was cold; there was no wine on the table, or no glasses; the meat was served plain, without sauce or parsley, the mustard had turned, he came across hairs on the roast, or the tablecloth smelt stale and took his appetite away; in fine, never did she give him anything that was to his taste. The woman, astonished, contented herself with denying these strange charges brought against her as civilly as she could.

"Ah!" said he. "So you deny it, you in your filthy dress! Very well! You come to dinner here to-day, and you shall be witnesses of her misconduct. And if she can serve me just once according to my wishes, I shall admit myself wrong in all that I have said, and I shall never lift a hand against her again, but leave her my halberd and my breeches, and cease giving orders here." "Very good!" she said quite gaily; "then henceforth shall I be lady and mistress."

"Then the husband, counting on the nature and imperfection of the woman, desired the dinner to be served under the vine in his courtyard, thinking he would shout after her if she dallied on her way from the table to the buffet. The good-housewife applied herself with might and main to do her job well. She provided dishes clean as mirrors, mustard that was fresh and rightly made, a well-concocted dinner, hot enough to burn your throat, and appetizing as stolen fruit; the glasses were beautifully polished, the wine was cooled, and all was so nice, so white, so shining, that her meal would have honoured a bishop's trollop. But just when she was smacking her lips with satisfaction in front of the table, giving it that super-luious glance which good housewives like to give to everything, her husband chanced to knock on the door. At that moment a con-bounded hen, which had been cunning enough to climb the vine to gorge herself with grapes, let fall a good-sized excrement on the most handsome part of the tablecloth. The poor woman almost

fell down dead, so great was her despair; and the only means found to cope with the hen's immoderation was to cover the sightly matter with a plate, upon which she placed some spare of which she had in her pocket, caring no more for symmetry at Then, so that no one should notice the thing, she promptly brow in the soup, made everyone sit down, and gaily bade them all en themselves.

"Now, when everyone saw the fine array of dishes piled high w food, they cried out in admiration---except the wretched husband who remained gloomy and scowling, puckering his brows, mutt ing, and looking everywhere for a straw with which to belabe his wife. Whilst she, quite glad to be able to provoke him protect by her family, deliberately said to him: "There's a meal all hot f you, well dished up, with clean, white linen, salt in the cellars, cle jugs, cool wine, golden-cruised bread. What is missing? Wh are you looking for? What more do you want? What more d you need?" "Oh, muck!" said he in high dudgeon. "The goo woman quickly uncovered the plate and replied: "My dear . . here you are!" Seeing this the sergeant was left quite dumb founded, thinking the devil had gone over to his wife. "Thereupon, he was soundly rated by the relations who put the blame on him, jeered at him unmercifully, and called him more names in half-an-hour than a clerk can scribble in a month. From that day on the sergeant lived comfortably and peaceably with his wife, who, at the slightest hint or scowl, would say to him: "Is it muck you're want- ing?" "

"Whose was the worst?" cried the Angevin, giving the landlord hangman's slap on the shoulder. "His was! His was!" said th two others; and they began to argue among themselves like the hol fathers at a synod, trying, by fighting one another, throwing pots a each other's heads, and getting on their feet to find an opportunity to run for it and reach the fields.

"I'll settle it for you," cried the landlord, seeing that, whereas there had been three good intentioned debtors, none now had a thought for the real bill in question.

They stopped out of sheer fright.

"I'm going to tell a better one still, and then you shall give me ten sous per stomach." "Silence for the landlord!" said the Angevin.

"In our suburb of Notre-Dame-la-Riche, to which this hostelry appertains, there lived a beautiful girl who besides her natural assets, had a goodly store of money. Thus it was that as soon as she was old and strong enough to bear the burden of marriage, she had as many suitors as there are sous in the alms-box of St. Gatien's on Easter Day. This girl chose one who, saving your presence, could work as hard night and day as a couple of monks together. They were soon betrothed, and their marriage well on the way. But the bliss of the first night did not draw near without causing the bride some slight misgiving, since she was liable, in virtue of an infirmity affecting her drains, to excogitate vapours, which resolved themselves, as it were, into bombshells. Now, fearing lest she give rein that first night to her crazy flatulence, while thinking of other things, she finally avowed the matter to her mother, whose help she invoked. The good woman told her that this property of begetting wind was a family inheritance in her, and that she herself had been much bothered by it in her time. But, later in life, God had been kind to her and had closed up her crupper, and for seven years now she had vented nothing, save one last time when by way of adieu she had given her late husband a remarkable airing.

"But," she said to her daughter, 'I had an unfailing recipe left me by my good mother, to reduce these surplus winds to naught, and to exhale them noiselessly. By this means, seeing that these puffs of wind have no bad smell, all shame is perfectly avoided. The thing to do is to let the windy matter simmer, hold it back as it issues from the hole, and then push firmly; the air, being thus constricted, flows out like a sigh. In our family this is called strangling wind'."

"The girl, well pleased at knowing how to strangle wind, thanked her mother, and danced away in good style, piling up her winds at the end of her pipe like an organ-blower waiting for the first



*How the Château d'Azay
came to be built*

Jehan, son of Simon Fourniez, known as Simonnin, was a citizen of Tours and originally came from the village of Moulinot, near Beaune, from which he took his name, in imitation of the professional taxgatherers, when he was given the position of treasurer to the late King Louis the Eleventh. He fell into great disfavour and had to flee into Languedoc one day with his wife, leaving his son Jacques behind him in Touraine quite penniless. This young man had nothing in the world except himself, his name and his sword, but old men past the prime of life would have considered him very rich. He made up his mind to save his father and to make his own fortune at Court, which was at that time resident in Touraine. Very early in the morning he used to leave his lodgings, and well muffled up in his cloak, except for his nose which he left outside, he would stroll around the town on an empty stomach, untroubled by indigestion. Then he would go into the churches, admire their beauty, make a rapid survey of the chapels, brush the flies off the pictures, and count the columns in the naves, just like any sightseer who has no idea what to do with his time and money. At other times he would pretend to be reciting paternosters, but he was really addressing silent prayers to the ladies, offering them holy water as they went out, following them at a distance, and trying by means of these small services, to get himself involved in some adventure in which, by risking his life, he could provide himself with a patron or a gracious mistress. He had two doubloons in his belt, which he valued more than his skin, because his skin could always be replaced, whereas these doubloons never would be. Every day he used some of his money to buy a loaf of bread and a few rotten apples, on which he managed to exist, and then he could drink as much water as he liked from the River Loire. This wise and moderate diet, besides being good for his

doubloons, kept him as lively and light as a greyhound, and made his brain clear and his heart warm, for the water of the Loire is the most heating of all cordials, because it has a long way to come and warms itself up by running over so much ground before reaching Tours. Well, you can imagine how the poor fellow conjured up visions of all sorts of good fortune, which he almost came to believe to be true. Oh, what happy days they were!

One night Jacques de Beaune (he kept the name though he was not the Lord of Beaune), was walking about the town, busy cursing his luck and everything else, seeing that his last doubloon looked as though it were going to desert him without ceremony, when at the corner of a little street he very nearly ran into a veiled lady, from whom he caught a whiff of delicious perfume. This pedestrian, raised gracefully on pretty pattens, was wearing a beautiful gown of Italian velvet, with great sleeves lined with satin. As a sample of her value, through her veil a white diamond of no small size shone on her brow, catching the rays of the setting sun, among her hair which was so cunningly rolled and divided and so neatly plaited that her servants must have spent three hours doing it. She walked like a lady who is used to being carried in a litter, and her page, well armed, walked behind her. She seemed to be very vain of her charms, and probably belonged to some lord of high rank or some lady of the Court, for she lifted her skirt a little and delicately swung her hips like a woman of rank. She may have been a lady or she may have been a woman of the town, but whatever she was she pleased Jacques de Beaune, who, far from disdaining her, determined in his desperation to attach himself to her until death should part him from her. With this in mind, he decided to follow her, so as to find out where she would lead him, to Paradise or the depths of Hell, to the gallows or to some love-nest. He was so miserable that he would have caught at any straw of hope.

The lady was taking a walk along by the Loire, down towards Plessis, breathing in the pleasant freshness of the water like a fish, playing and frisking like a mouse that wants to see everything and

try everything. When her page noticed that Jacques de Beaune was hanging on and following the lady wherever she went, stopping when she did, and watching her idling, shamelessly, as though he had the right to do so, he suddenly turned round with a savage, threatening scowl, like a dog who says, "Get back, Sir!" But the good Tourainian had his wits about him. Thinking that if a cat may look at a king, he, a baptised Christian, might certainly look at a pretty woman, he stepped forward, pretending to smile at the page, and swaggered in front of the lady. She said never a word, but looked up at the sky which for her pleasure was putting on its evening clothes, stars and all. So far so good. When she came opposite to Portillon, she stopped. Then, so as to see what was going on, she threw her veil back over her shoulder, and had a shrewd look at the youth, to see if she were in any danger of being robbed. I may tell you that Jacques de Beaune was a thorough ladies' man and could have walked beside a princess without disgracing her, and had that firm, resolute look that women like. He may have been a little sunburnt by being so much in the open air, but his skin would look white enough under the hangings of a bed. The look this lady shot at him, a look as slippery as an eel, seemed to him to be more interested than that with which she would have favoured her prayer book. And so he based the hope of a windfall of love on this look, and decided to follow the adventure to the very hem of the petticoat and further still, risking in it not his life—for he cared little for that—but his two ears, and even something else as well.

So the young man followed the lady into the town, going back by the Rue des Trois Pucelles. She led the gallant through a maze of little streets to the square in which the Hotel de la Crouzille now stands. There she halted at the door of a fine house, on which the page knocked. One of her servants opened it, and when the lady had gone in shut it again, leaving the Sieur de Beaune gaping and panting on the doorstep, looking as silly as Monseigneur Saint Denis before he succeeded in picking up his head. He raised his nose in the air to see if some favourable

morsel would be thrown down to him, and saw nothing but a light which went up the stairs, through the rooms, and then stopped at a handsome window which must have been the lady's room. The poor lover stood there plunged in gloom, thinking and wondering what to do next. The window gave a sudden creak and interrupted his thoughts. Thinking that his lady was going to call to him, he looked up again, and but for the shelter of the bow-window would certainly have received the full force of a good quantity of cold water, not to mention the jug that it was in as well, seeing that only the handle was left in the hands of the person who was so bent on damping his ardour. Jacques de Beaune, delighted at this turn of events, seized the opportunity to fling himself at the foot of the wall, crying out "I am killed!" in a very feeble voice. Then he stretched himself among the fragments of pottery, and lay there shamming dead, to see what would happen. The servants came rushing out in great excitement, much afraid of their mistress whom they had told what they had done, opened the door and picked up the wounded man, who could hardly prevent himself laughing as they bore him up the stairs.

"He is quite cold," said the page.

"He is covered with blood," said the steward, who had got his hands wet as he felt him over.

"If he recovers, I will pay for a Mass to Saint Gatien!" cried the guilty one in tears.

"Madame takes after her dead father, and if she doesn't have you hanged, the least that'll happen will be that you'll be thrown out of her house and service," replied the other one. "He's dead all right. He's so heavy."

"Ah, I must be in the house of some very great lady," thought Jacques.

"Lord! Is he quite dead?" asked the author of the deed.

Then as they were clumsily hoisting him along beside the wall, his doublet caught on an ornament sticking out from the hand-rail, and the dead man called out:

"Hey there! My doublet!"

"He groaned!" cried the guilty one, with a sigh of relief.

The Regent's servants (for this was the house of the daughter the late Louis the Eleventh of honourable memory) brought Jacques into a room and left him stretched out on a table, thinking that he was past hope of recovery.

"Run and fetch the best doctor," said Madame de Beaujeu, "on, run!"

The servants were out of the room and down the stairs in a trice. Then the good Regent sent her women to fetch ointment, bandages, goulard-water, and a lot of other things, so that she was left alone. Then, taking a good look at the handsome unconscious man and admiring his physique and his looks, which were good dead as he was, she said aloud:

"Alas, God means to punish me! For once, one poor little woman in my life, a wicked desire awoke in the depths of my soul and possessed me with its devilish power; and my patron Saint is angry and has deprived me of the prettiest gentleman I ever saw. God Almighty! By the soul of my father, I will hang every man who had a hand in his death!"

"Madame!" cried Jacques de Beaune, jumping off the board he was lying on, and falling at the Regent's feet. "I live to serve you and am so little harmed that I promise you to-night as much pleasure as there are months in the year, in imitation of the *Sieur Hercules*, a pagan Baron. For the last twenty days," said the good fellow, thinking that this called for a little lying to help things along, "I don't know how many times I have met you. I was mad with love for you, but I did not dare to present myself to you, out of my great respect for you. But I am indeed intoxicated with your royal beauty, as you can judge, for I was driven to invent the trick to which I owe the happiness of being at your feet."

Then he kissed her feet most amorously and looked at the good lady in a most ruinously seductive way. The Regent, due to age

which does not spare even queens, was, as everyone knows, in her second youth. Now at this cruel and critical time, women who have previously been virtuous and loverless are overcome by a strong desire for one night of love unknown to all but God, so that they may not leave this world with their hands, their hearts and their rest empty through ignorance of those particular delights which are well known.

So my Lady of Beaujeu did not appear in the least surprised by the young man's proposal (for royalty must be accustomed to have everything by the dozen), and she let this ambitious speech sink into her mind or into the place where love is registered, which promptly burst into flames at the thought. Then she raised the young Touranian to his feet, and he in his misery found the courage to smile at his mistress. She had the majesty of a full-down rose, ears like shoes, and the complexion of a sick cat, but was so well dolled up, and had such a fine figure and such a royal pot and such agile hips, that it was still possible for him to find, in his fix, unsuspected aids to help him to put into practice the promise he had made.

"Who are you?" asked the Regent, putting on her father's stern look.

"I am your most faithful subject, Jacques de Beaune, the son of your treasurer who has fallen into disgrace in spite of his faithful service."

"Well," replied the lady, "get back on your table! I hear someone coming, and it is not fitting that my servants should think that I am your partner in this farce and mummer."

The good fellow understood, from the tender tone of her voice that the good lady forgave him most graciously the enormity of his love. So he lay down on the table again, thinking to himself that here were some lords who had got to Court, riding an old nag. This thought thoroughly reconciled him to his good fortune.

"Well," said the Regent to her maids, "nothing is needed. The

gentleman is better. Glory be to God and the Holy Vir,
There will have been no murder in my house!"

As she said this, she ran her hands through the hair of this knight who was such a timely gift from heaven. Then, taking some refreshing water, she rubbed his temples with it, and loosened his doublet. And under the pretence of interest in the wounded man's recovery, she verified better than any clerk trained to give estimate the youthful softness of this fine young fellow who promised pleasure with such assurance. Everyone, men and women, were amazed to see the Regent do this. But humanity never sits on persons of royal blood. Jacques sat up, pretended to be bewildered, then thanked the Regent most humbly and dismissed the doctor, the surgeon, and other devils in black, saying that he had recovered. Then he gave his name, and tried to leave with a salute to Madame Beaujeu, as though he were afraid of her account of his father's disgrace, but really horrified by his frightful promise.

"I will not allow it," she said. "People who enter my house should not get the reception you got here. The Sieur de Beaune will dine here," she said to her steward. "The person who so inconsiderately harmed him will be at his disposal, if that person comes forward at once. Otherwise I will have him searched out and hanged by the provost."

When he heard this, the page who had accompanied the lady on her walk came forward.

"Madame," said Jacques, "may I beg you to pardon and reward him, for it is to him that I owe the pleasure of seeing you, and the honour of dining in your company and perhaps of getting my father restored to the position which it pleased your glorious father to bestow on him."

"Well said," replied the Regent. "J'Estouville!" she said, turning to the page, "I give you command of a company of archers. But in future don't throw anything out of the windows."

Then the Regent, charmed with de Beaune, gave him her hand and

he conducted her most gallantly to her room, where they talked easily together while supper was being prepared. You can be sure that *Sieur Jacques* made a good display of his talents in justifying his father and gaining the lady's good opinion. As everyone knows, she took after her father and did things impulsively. *Jacques de Beaune* thought to himself that it would be very difficult for him to sleep with the Regent. Such arrangements are not made as easily as the marriages of cats, who have always got a gutter on the rooftops where they can carry on as they please. So he congratulated himself on having made the Regent's acquaintance without having to deal out to her the promised dozen, because to do this the maids and servants would have to be out of the way and her honour safeguarded. Nevertheless, suspecting the good lady's cunning, he would feel his body every now and then, and ask himself if he would be equal to the task. But all the time she was chatting, the Regent was thinking about this as well. She had arranged many a less tricky business, and she began to scheme very hard. She called in a secretary, a man acquainted with the measures most suitable to the perfect government of the kingdom, and ordered him to hand her secretly a false message, during supper. Then the meal came in. The lady did not touch it, for her heart was swollen like a sponge, and had restricted the space in her stomach, for she was thinking all the time about this handsome and seductive man, and had appetite only for him. *Jacques* did not refuse food, for many varied reasons. The good messenger came in. Madame the Regent stormed, knit her brows as the late King did, and said: "Is there no peace in this State? God Almighty! Can we not have one peaceful evening?" And she got up and began to walk about. "Hey there! My mare! Where is Monsieur de Vieilleville, my groom? Not here? He's in Picardy. Very well, D'Estouville, you will rejoin me with my servants at the castle of Amboise." And, glancing at her *Jacques*, she said: "You shall be my squire, *Sieur de Beaune*. If you wish to serve the King, this is your chance. Yes, by the Lord! Come with me, for there are rebels to be put down, and faithful servants are needed."

Then in the space of time that a poor man would take to say hundred "Aves," horses were bridled, saddled and ready. Madam was mounted on her mare, with the Tourainian at her side, galloping at top speed to the castle of Amboise, followed by the soldier. To be brief and get to the point without more ado, the Sieur d'Beaune was housed twelve yards away from Madame de Beaujeu's room, far from prying eyes. The courtiers and all the servants were in a great taking and ran about asking from which side the enemy was coming. But the maker of dozens, taken at his word knew very well where the enemy was. The Regent's virtue famous throughout the realm, saved her from suspicion, for she was supposed to be as impregnable as the castle of Péronne. When the curfew was sounded and everything was shut up, eyes and ears too, and the castle was quiet, Madame de Beaujeu dismissed her maid and called for her squire. The squire duly arrived. Then the lady and the adventurer sat side by side on a velvet couch, beneath the mantelpiece of a great chimney. And the curious Regent immediately enquired of Jacques most tenderly:

"You must be badly bruised. It was very wrong of me to make a gentle servant ride twelve miles, when he had been wounded by one of my people. I was so anxious for you that I did not want to go to bed without seeing you. Are you in pain?"

"Only with impatience," said the lord of the dozen, thinking that it would not do to hang back in this situation. "Your servant sees, beautiful and noble mistress, that he has found favour with you."

"Come now," she said. "You were lying, were you not, when you told me . . . ?"

"What?" he asked.

"Why, that you had followed me a dozen times when I went to church and other places?"

"Yes, I was," he said.

"Then," replied the Regent, "it surprises me that I have never before seen such a fine young man, whose courage is so clearly

imprinted on his features. "I do not take back anything of what you heard when I thought you were dead. You please me and I wish you well."

Then the hour of the terrible sacrifice had come, and Jacques fell on his knees before the Regent, and kissed her feet and hands, and everything else, so they say. And as he kissed and made his preparations, he proved by many arguments to his queen's long-preserved virtue, that a lady who carries the burden of the State has a perfect right to amuse herself a little. The Regent would not accept this argument, for she was determined to be taken against her will, so that she could put all the blame of the sin on her lover. All the same she had certainly perfumed herself in advance and dressed in her night attire; she glowed with her desire, and this gave her a good colour which improved her complexion better than any cosmetics could. And in spite of her weak protests she was masterfully carried off like a young girl to her royal bed, where the good lady and her young dozent made love together in good faith. From playing to arguments, arguments to riots, riots to ribaldry, thread to needle, the Regent declared that she believed more in the virginity of the Holy Mary than in the promised dozen. Now it happened that Jacques de Beaune did not find this great lady old at all under the sheets, for everything undergoes a change in the light of lamps at night. Many women of fifty by day are twenty at midnight, just as others are twenty at mid-day and a hundred after Vespers.

So Jacques, happier at finding this than meeting the King on a day for hanging, repeated his promise. Then Madame, secretly astonished, promised every assistance on her side, as well as the manor of Azay-le-Brûlé well stocked with movables, and the title thereof for her knight, as well as pardon for his father, if she were beaten in this duel.

Then the good fellow said to himself:

"That's to save my father from punishment!
This for the fiend!"

That for the let and sale!
This for the forest of Azay!
One for the fishing rights!
Another for the islets of the Indre!
This for the meadows!
This is to buy back our lands at La Carte,
that my father bought for such a price!

He had arrived unhindered at this total, thinking that his honour was at stake, and that as he had France under him, honour of the Crown was in question. In short, at the cost of a vow which he made to his Patron, Monsieur Saint Jacques, to buy him a chapel at Azay, he presented his vassal's homage to the Regent in eleven periphrases, clear, neat, distinct and elegant. for the epilogue to this conversation, the Tourainian was brave enough to aim at giving the Regent a really good time, saving something for her when she awoke, as an honest man should, as the thanks that the Seigneur of Azay naturally owed to his sovereign—which was a very good idea. But when Nature, like a deadbeat, she behaves just like a horse and lies down, and won't die under the whip rather than move, and lies there until it suits her to get up again reinvigorated. So when in the morning the young falcon of the manor of Azay undertook to salute the daughter of King Louis the Eleventh, he was obliged to do so as the sovereigns do—with blank salvos. So that the Regent, when she got up and was breakfasting with Jacques, who called himself the rightful Lord of Azay, took advantage of this insufficiency to contradict her knight and claimed that he had not won his wager, and so would not get his reward.

"Ventre-Saint-Paterne! I was near enough to it!" said Jacques de Beaune. "But, my dear lady and noble sovereign, neither you nor I can judge in this case. This, being a question of property, must be laid before your council, seeing that the fief of Azay is bought from the Crown."

"I replied the Regent, laughing uncomfortably. "I will keep the Sieur de Vicilleville's place in my household,

will not have your father punished, will give you Azay and a royal position, if you state the case in front of the council without damage to my honour. But if one word should stain my reputation as a pure woman . . ."

"May I be hanged," said the dozer, making a joke of the matter, for Madame de Beaujeu was looking a little angry.

In fact the daughter of Louis the Eleventh cared much more for her royalty than this rascally dozen which did not concern her much, as she thought that having had a good night of love for nothing, she would be more amused by the difficult recital of this claim than she would be by another dozen which the Tourainian offered her.

"Then, my lady," said her lusty comrade, "I shall certainly be your squire."

All the captains, secretaries and others with positions in the royal house were astonished at the sudden departure of Madame de Beaujeu. They learnt the reason for it and came to the castle of Amboise, anxious to know the source of the uprising. They were ready to hold a council when the Regent got up. She called them together, and to prevent their suspecting that she had tricked them, she gave them some nonsense to digest, which they did very wisely. At the close of this sitting the new squire came in to fetch the lady. Seeing the councillors rising from their seats the bold Tourainian asked them to decide a point of law which concerned him and the property of the Crown.

"Listen to him," said the Regent, "for he is speaking the truth." Then Jacques de Beaune, quite unembarrassed by the sight of this noble court of justice, began to speak, and he said something like this :

"Noble lords, I beg of you, although I am going to talk to you about nut-shells, to give your attention to this case and to excuse the triviality of my language. A lord was walking with another lord in an orchard, and they saw a fine walnut tree, well planted,

well grown, beautiful to see, and beautiful enough to keep, although it was a little hollow. It was a fresh, sweet-smelling walnut tree a tree you would never tire of, once you had seen it. A delicious tree which seemed like the tree of Good and Evil, forbidden by God, on whose account our mother Eve and her husband were banished. Well, gentlemen, this walnut tree was the subject of an argument between the two lords and of one of those pleasant bets that friends make. The younger boasted that he could throw through this leafy tree twelve times a stick that he happened to have in his hand—as many people have when out walking in an orchard—and that at each throw of the stick he would knock down a nut . . . that is the crucial point in the case, is it not?" asked Jacques, turning to the Regent.

"Yes, that is so, gentlemen," she replied, amazed at the cunning of her squire.

"The other wagered that he would not be able to do this," went on the pleader. "The young boaster threw the stick with such sure precision of aim, so gently and so well that they both of them enjoyed it. Then, with the fortunate protection of the saints who no doubt were amused at the game, a nut fell at every throw. And, in fact, twelve fell. But it happened that the last of the nuts to fall was hollow and contained no vital substance from which another walnut could have grown, if the gardener had wished to plant it. Now did the man with the stick win the bet? Well, I have finished. It is for you to judge."

"The case is perfectly clear," said Messire Adam Fumée, a Tourainian who was then Keeper of the Seals. "The other man has only one thing to do."

"What is that?" asked the Regent.

"To pay, Madame."

"He is much too clever," she said, lightly slapping the squire's cheek. "He will be hanged one day. . . ."

She only said it in fun. But this remark turned out to be a true prophecy, for the future treasurer climbed the gallows of Mont-

falcon by the rope of royal favour and the vengeance of another old woman, and the great treachery of a man of Ballan, his secretary, whose fortune he had made, by name Prévost--and not René Gentil, as some have quite wrongly called him. This wicked and treacherous servant gave, they say, to Madame d'Angoulême the receipt for the money which had been given to him by our Jacques de Beaune, who had become the Baron de Semblangay, Lord of La Carte and of Azay, and one of the pillars of the State. He had two sons, one of whom became Archbishop of Tours, the other Minister of Finance and Governor of Touraine. But that has nothing to do with this story.

Well, as for the youthful adventure of our hero, Madame de Beaujeu, for whom the fine game of love had begun a little late in life, was very pleased to find such wisdom and understanding of public affairs in her chance lover. She made him King's Treasurer, a post which he filled so admirably and in which he multiplied the royal dozens so well that his great repute eventually earned the management of the Revenue for him. He became superintendent and controlled the employment of it most judiciously, not without some profit to himself, which was only fair. The good Regent paid the bet and had the Manor of Azay-le-Brûlé handed over to her squire. For the Castle had been demolished by the first bombardiers who came to Touraine, as is common knowledge. For this miracle of pulverisation, if it had not been for the intervention of the King, these artillerymen would have been condemned as heretics and agents of the Devil, by the ecclesiastical tribunal of the Chapter.

Now at this time Monsieur Bohier, Minister of Finance, was engaged in building the Castle of Chenonceaux, which as a curiosity and a gem of beauty, had its foundations built right across the River Cher. So the Baron de Semblangay, not to be outdone, boasted that he would build his castle on the bed of the River Indre. It still stands there, the jewel of this lovely green valley, for so solidly was it raised on its pile foundations. Besides, Jacques de Beaune spent thirty thousand crowns on it, not counting the

work done by his vassals. But you can take my word for it that this castle is one of the most beautiful, the most attractive, exquisite and best decorated in lovely Touraine. It still bathes itself in the Indre like a royal lady, gaily dressed in its flags and lace-curtain windows, with pretty soldiers on its weathervanes, turning with the wind, as all soldiers do. But Semblançay was hanged before it was finished, and nobody since then has ever had enough money to complete it. However his lord, King Francis, first of the name, was his guest there, and you can still see the royal chamber. When the King went to bed, Semblançay, whom the King called "father" in honour of his white hair, hearing his dearly loved master say "Your clock has just struck twelve, father!", replied:

"Oh Sire, I owe my lands, the money spent on this castle and the honour of serving you to twelve strokes of a hammer, which is very old now, but which struck the same hour many times once."

The good King wished to know what his servant meant by these strange words. Then while the King was getting into bed, Jacques de Beaune related to him the story you have heard. Francis the First, who loved these spicy tales, thought the adventure very funny, especially as his mother, the Duchess of Angoulême, herself in the decline of life, was pursuing the Constable of Bourbon, to obtain from him a few of these same dozens. It was an evil love of an evil woman, as it turned out, for the Kingdom was endangered through it, the King was taken, and poor Semblançay was killed, as I have told you.

I have taken care to relate here how the Château d'Azay was built, because it is certain that the great wealth of Semblançay had its beginning in this. Semblançay did much for his native town, and helped to beautify it. He spent considerable sums on completing the Cathedral towers. This story has been handed from father to son, and from lord to lord in Azay-le-Ridel, where the tale still wantonly runs beneath the King's curtains, which have been curiously respected down to the present day. So that there is nothing more untrue than to attribute this Tourainian dozen to a German knight, who by this act would have conquered the domains

f Austria and the House of Hapsburg. The contemporary author who brought the story to light, though he is very learned, has been deceived by the chroniclers, because the Government of the Roman Empire makes no mention of this way of acquiring land. I am annoyed with him for believing that a male potency nourished on beer could perform this mystery as honourably as the Chinonian specimens, so admired by Rabelais. I have, to the advantage of the country, the glory of Azay, the good conscience of the castle and the fame of the House of Beaune, which produced the Sauves and the Noirmoutiers, re-established the facts in their veritable, historical and miraculous beauty.

If any ladies should go and visit the Castle, they will still find a few dozens in the country, but they can only be got retail!



*The Sermon of
the Merry Vicar of Meudon*

The last time Master François Rabelais came to the Court Henry II was in the winter when he forsook this mortal life for to live only in his immortal writings, resplendent with that philosophy to which we all return sooner or later. He had at time seen seventy summers, or nearly as many. His fine hom head was almost bald, but he still had a magnificent beard, an charming youthful shy smile; and wisdom dwelt in his broad br He was a fine-looking old man, according to those who were lu enough to know him, and his face combined the qualities of Socr and Aristophanes, once enemies, but happily united in him. realised that his last hour would soon be sounding in his ears, a so he decided to go and pay his duty to the King of France, w as he had come with his court to his castle of Tournelles, was on a stone's throw away from Rabelais' own house, which was in t Saint Paul Gardens. Assembled together in Queen Catherine Medici's room were: Diana of Poitiers, the King's mistress, b received by the Queen for high reasons of state, the King, the Hig Constable, the Cardinals Lorraine and du Bellay, the two de Gui brothers, Lord Birago and various other Italians, who had alrea gained a great deal of influence at court under cover of the Queer protection, the Admiral, Montgomery, all the people in their trai and several poets, such as Melin de Saint-Gelais, Philibert de l'Or and Lord Brantôme.

The King, who looked upon Rabalais as a bit of a wag, noticed him in the court, and after some conversation said to him smiling "Have you ever delivered a sermon to your parishioners at Meudon?"

Master Rabelais thought the King must be joking, since the duties of his post had consisted of nothing more than receiving the tithes,

o he answered : "Sire, I find my flock everywhere, and my sermons are heard all over Christendom."

Then glancing round at the courtiers, who all except du Bellay and de Chastillon, looked upon him as nothing more than a cleverester, when he was really the king of wits, and a far better king than he whose crown alone the courtiers respect, there came to him a malicious desire, before shaking the dust of this world from his feet, to philosophise right over their heads, just as it amused Gargantua to give the Parisians a bath from the top of Notre Dame. So he added : "If you are in a good humour, Sire, I can entertain you with a delightful and apposite little sermon, which I have been keeping under my hat to tell as a parable on just such an occasion as this." "Gentlemen," said the King, "Master François Rabelais is the ear of the court, and what he is going to say concerns our salvation. So be quiet and listen—he always has some amusing angelical remarks to make." "Sir," said the good vicar. "I shall now begin."

Then all the courtiers were quiet and gathered round in a circle to hear what the creator of Pantagruel had to say. And he began to tell them the following tale, in language that cannot be equalled for its eloquence. As it has been preserved only by word of mouth, however, the Author must beg to be forgiven for transcribing it in his own style :

In his old age Gargantua adopted some strange habits, which greatly astonished his household, but which he was forgiven because of his being seven hundred and four years old (in spite of what St. Clement of Alexandria says in his 'Stromates' to the effect that he is a quarter of a day younger than this—not that it makes any difference). Now Gargantua had noticed that everything was going wrong in his house and everyone was fleecing him, and he was afraid that when he came to die he would have been stripped of his possessions; so he decided to try to find a better way of looking after them. And this was very wise of him. So in the corner of the Gargantuan mansion he stored away a big heap of red wheat, plenty pots of mustard, and other delicacies, such as prunes and

aubergines from Touraine, biscuits, pork fat and rissoles, Olive cheese, goat's cheese and other kinds of cheese for which the country between Langeais and Loches is famous, pots of butter, ham paste, preserved duck, pigs' trotters in bran, pots and pots of split peas, nice little pots of quince preserve from Orleans, barrels of lampreys, bowls of green sauce, river game, such as partridge, teal, sheldrake, heron and flamingo, all preserved in salt, dried raisin smoked tongue, done in the way invented by Gargantua's famous ancestor, Happe-Mousche, sweetmeats for Gargamelle on high days and holidays, and a great many other things, which are related in detail in the Ripuary laws and in certain documents of the Capitularies, Pragmatics, royal establishments, ordinances and institutions of the time. In short, the good man put his spectacles on his nose or his nose into his spectacles, and set about finding a really good dragon or unicorn, which he could put in charge of all these precious things; and he went into his garden to think over this important matter.

"He did not want to have one of the fabulous monsters, the Cockatrice, because the Egyptians did not find them very satisfactory, as may be seen in their writings. He also dismissed the idea of engaging the legions of Caucquemarres, because the emperors, and the Romans as well, did not approve of them, according to that sly fellow, Tacitus. In the same way he decided against the Picrocholiers assembled in council, and the Magi, the Druids, the legions of Papimania and the Massorets, because his son Pantagruel had told him, when he came home from his journeyings, how they grew like the green bay tree and overflowed into every country. The good man, remembering all these old stories, had no faith in any creature, and if he could have done so, he would have asked God to concoct a new one altogether. But he did not dare to bother him with such trifles, and poor Gargantua did not know whom to choose for the job. He was just thinking that he was bound to lose many of his goods, when he came across a pretty little shrewmouse of the noble family of Shrewmice, who bear all gules on an azure ground. By Heaven, but it was a fine animal, and it had the finest

tail in all its family. There it sat preening itself in the sunshine, as one of God's own shrewmice should, proud of being able to trace its noble ancestry back to the time of the Flood by means of irrefutable documentary evidence, for it appears from the Ecumenical Enquiry that there was a shrewmouse aboard the Ark."

At this point Master Rabelais raised his hat slightly, and said everently: "It was Noah, my lords, who first planted the vine, and ad the pleasure of getting drunk on the juice of its fruit. There must have been a shrewmouse in the Ark, from which we all came; but whereas human beings have not minded adulterating their stock the shrewmice have been more jealous of the honour of their race—more so than any of the other animals. They would not even receive a fieldmouse into their family: even if he could change rains of sand into fresh sweet nuts.

This nobility and pride appealed to Gargantua, and he conceived the idea of giving this shrewmouse the charge of his barns, with all powers—justice, Committimus, Missi Dominici, clergy, police, and all. The shrewmouse swore to discharge his duties well and faithfully, on condition that he should be allowed to take up his quarters on the heap of corn—which Gargantua thought was quite reasonable. So there was my shrewmouse installed in his fine quarters, as happy as a happy prince, looking round his domains of mustard, countries of sugar, provinces of ham, duchies of raisins, counties of sausages, shires of all kinds of food, and climbing over the heaps of corn, and sweeping everything with his tail. He was welcomed everywhere, in fact, with honour—by the pots, which maintained a respectful silence before him, apart from one or two old tankards which clinked together like church bells ringing the sin. This pleased him greatly, and he thanked them by an inclination of the head to left and to right, as he strolled up and down in a shaft of sunlight that had penetrated into the barn.

The sun lit up his fur and made it shine a rich brown colour, so that you would have thought he was one of the Northern kings dressed in his sables. Then after many twists and turns and jumps

and capers, he sat himself down upon the heap of wheat like a king with his full court, munched a couple of grains, and thought himself the finest shrewmouse in the world.

"At that moment out of their accustomed holes came the gentlemen of the night-time court, who scamper across the floor with their little feet. These gentlemen were the rats and mice, and all other gnawing, thieving, good-for-nothing creatures which are the bane of every good housewife's life. When they saw the shrewmouse, they all took fright and stopped short on the threshold of their holes. But among these common folk there was one ruffian of the scampering nibbling race of mice, who came forward in spite of the danger, and putting his nose out of the window, plucked up courage to take a good look at Master Shrewmouse who was sitting there, proudly planted on his hind legs, with his tail in the air; and he came to the conclusion that he was a devil from whom nothing but scratches were to be expected. This was what he thought so.

"So that all the other shrewmice, cats, weasels, martens, fieldmice, rats, and other bad characters of the same kind, should fully recognise the high authority of his lieutenant, Gargantua had dipped his snout, which was as pointed as a larding-pin, in musk oil. This smell has been inherited by all shrewmice since that time because that particular one did not take Gargantua's good advice and consorted with other creatures not of his own kind. All the troubles in Shrewmouse-land came from this, and I would give you a good historical account of it all if I had time. Well, anyway, this old mouse, or rat—the rabbis of the Talmud have never been able to agree which it was—realised, when he smelt the musk perfume, that this shrewmouse had been put there to watch over Gargantua's grain, that he had been given authority, invested with full powers and armed at all points. And he was afraid that he would no longer be able to get enough to live on, according to the mouse custom, in the way of crumbs, scraps, crusts, morsels, leavings, bits, fragments and a hundred and one other things that were to be found in this Promised Land of rats.

"When he found himself faced with this difficulty, the mouse, who was as cunning as a courtier who has lived under two regencies and three kings, decided to try the shrewmouse's mettle, and to sacrifice himself for the sake of his compatriot's stomachs. This would have been a fine unselfish thing for a man to do, but it was far more so for a mouse, when you think of the lack of public spirit among mice, who live only for themselves, shamelessly and wantonly, who just for fun would desecrate the Host, gnaw a priest's stole without turning a whisker, and drink out of a communion cup without bothering their heads about God.

"The mouse came forward bowing and scraping, and the shrewmouse let him come quite near, because, to tell you the truth, shrewmice are rather short-sighted. Then this Curtius of nibblers made his little speech, not in the jargon of common mice, but in the polite language of shrewmice: 'My lord, I have heard a great deal about your illustrious family, and I am one of its most devoted servants. I know the whole story of your ancestors and how they were held in great esteem by the ancient Egyptians, who thought very highly of them and adored them as much as their sacred birds. All the same, your fur robe is so regally scented and its colour is so splendidly tanned that I am wondering if you are really of that race, for I have never seen any one of them as gorgeously attired as you. Still you ate the corn in the approved fashion; your snout is a wise-looking snout, and you kicked like a learned shrewmouse. But if you really are a shrewmouse, you ought to have in I don't know what part of your ear I don't know what kind of special auditory channel, which is closed at your secret behest I know not how by I know not what wonderful door, at I don't know what times, to enable you, I don't know why, to avoid having to listen to I don't know what things, which would be disagreeable to you, because of the special and peculiar perfection of your faculty of hearing, which would often be a source of discomfort to you.'

"Quite true," said the shrewmouse. "As soon as the door is shut, can't hear anything." "Let's try it," replied the old rascal. And he made for the heap of corn, and started to collect his store for

the winter. 'Can you hear anything?' he asked. 'Nothing but the pitter-patter of my heart.' 'Hurray!' cried all the mice. 'We shall easily be able to take him in!'

"The shrewmouse, who thought he had found a good servant, opened the door of his auditory orifice, and heard the swish of the grain falling through the hole. Then without waiting for justice to take its course, he jumped on the old mouse and then and there strangled him to death. It was a glorious death, for the hero died full of corn and was canonised as a martyr. The shrewmouse took him by the ears and stuck him over the granary door, after the manner of the Turkish sultans, at whose hands my good Panurge very nearly met his end. When they heard his dying cries, all the rats and mice and other creatures came running out of their holes in great fright.

"Then when night came, they all met together in the cellar to hold a council of war, which their lawful wedded wives were allowed to attend by virtue of the Papyrian and other laws. The rats wanted to go in front of the mice, and quite a serious squabble about precedence nearly spoilt everything; but the situation was saved by a big rat giving him arm to a lady mouse, and then all the rats and mice paired off in the same way. They all sat down on their bottoms with their tails in the air, their muzzles outstretched, their whiskers quivering, and their eyes as bright as falcons'.

"Then began a long discussion which ended in insults and wrangles worthy of an ecumenical council of holy fathers. Some said Yes, others said No, and a cat that was passing by took fright and ran away when it heard these extraordinary sounds: 'Bou, bou, frou, ou, ou, houic, houic, briff, briffnac, nac, nac, fouix, fouix, trr, trr, trr, razza, za, za, zaaa, brr, brrr, raaa, ra, ra, ra, ra, fouix!' all so well mixed up together in the general hullabaloo that councillors in a town hall could not have done better themselves. In the middle of all this hubbub, a little mouse that was too young to be at the meeting, had managed to push her inquisitive little nose through a crack. The hair on her little snout was as downy as any mouse that is too downy to be caught. As the meeting became more and

more noisy, she wriggled her body into the room after her nose. Then the little minx came to the hoop of a cask, and she merged herself so skilfully into the background that you would have thought she was a beautiful bit of carving in bas-relief. An old rat, who happened to raise his eyes to heaven to implore its aid in their difficulties, caught sight of the pretty little mouse, and declared that the State might yet be saved by her. All the snouts were turned towards this lady of Good Help, and they were silenced when they saw her, and all agreed that she should be let loose on the shrew-mouse. Then in spite of the jealousy of some of the envious lady mice, she was paraded in triumph round the cellar. The old rats fell in love with her when they saw her mincing along, swaying her little behind as she walked, putting her little head on one side, pricking her diaphanous ears and licking her lips and preening her whiskers with her little pink tongue, and they wagged their wrinkled, white-whiskered heads with delight at the sight of her, just as the old men of Troy did when they saw the lovely Helen returning from her bath.

So the young maiden was let loose in the granary with instructions to conquer the heart of the shrewmouse, and thus save her people, just as the beautiful Esther saved the chosen people from the king Assuerus, as is related in the Bible—or master book, as it is called, or the word 'Bible' comes from the Greek word 'biblos,' which means simply 'a book.' The mouse promised to deliver her people, or, as it happened, she was a queen among mice. She was a sweet plump little blond charmer, the most delicious lady that ever skipped nappily across the floor, or scratched between the walls, uttering little cries of joy when she came across nuts and crumbs and scraps of bread in her path. She was a real fairy mouse, with pretty en-learing ways and clear shining eyes, a tiny head, smooth silky coat, velte body, pink paws and a velvety tail. Besides this, she was a mouse of good family and well-spoken, with a natural preference for bed and idleness; she was happy by nature, and more cunning than an old Sorbonne professor who knows the Descretales inside out, gay and lively, with her white stomach, striped back, small jointed breasts, pearly teeth—a morsel fit for a king!"

The portrait was so boldly painted, in that it was a perfect description of Diana de Poitiers who was present at the time, that the courtiers were terrified. Queen Catherine was smiling, but the King had no desire to laugh. Rabelais went on with his story as if nothing had happened, ignoring the winks of the Cardinals du Bellay and Chastillon, who were afraid of what he might say next.

"The pretty little mouse," he went on, "did not waste any time, and from the very first evening that she paraded before the shrewmouse, she enslaved him for ever by her coquettish behaviour, first encouraging and then repulsing him, and indulging in little advance and provocative little refusals, burning glances, blushing like a young girl who wants to but does not dare, titillating looks, half-caresses, preparatory skirmishes, accesses of pride proper to a mouse who knows her own value, laughings and squeakings, and other charming triflings, feminine treacheries, delightful intoxicating wiles—all tricks that the women of every race always use.

"Well, after much bowing and scraping, stroking of paws, rubbing of noses, and other gallantries of amorous shrewmouse, knitting of brows, sighs, serenades, suppers, dinners and snacks on the heap of corn, and other junketings, the guardian of the barn overcame the scruples of his lovely mistress, and they delighted in their incestuous and illicit love. The mouse had the shrewmouse completely in her power, and she became absolute queen over his domain, mixed the wheat up with the mustard, tasted the sweetmeats, and made free with everything. The shrewmouse let her do whatever she liked, although he was betraying his trust as a shrewmouse and going back on the promises that he had made to Gargantua.

"The mouse followed up her advantage with true feminine pertinacity, and one night when they were disporting themselves, she suddenly thought of her poor old father and decided that he too should have a chance to eat some of the corn, and she threatened to leave the shrewmouse to moulder away all alone in his barn, if he did not
t her indulge her filial devotion as she wished. So
mouse's tail, the shrewmouse gave his ladylove's
ned with a great green seal and bound

in crimson silk), which decreed that he was free to come into Gargantua's palace at any time, see his good little daughter and salute her on the brow, and eat as much as he liked, as long as he kept out of the way.

"Then up came a venerable old rat, weighing at least twenty-five ounces, with a white tail, walking like the president of a court of justice, wagging his head. He was followed by fifteen or twenty nephews, all with teeth like saws, who impressed on the shrewmouse by dint of much good talking and arguing how they, his relations, were going to devote themselves faithfully to his service, and were going to help him by going through all the things that had been put into his charge, making a full list of them and counting and labelling them, so that when Gargantua came on a visit of inspection, he would find the accounts and everything in perfect order. All the same, in spite of their excellent reasoning, the poor shrewmouse was torn by doubts and anxieties, and his little shrewmouse conscience was worried.

"Noticing how distraught and careworn he was, one morning the mouse, who had already fallen pregnant by him, conceived the idea of calming his doubts and easing his mind by a Sorbonnical consultation, and sent for the learned members of the tribe. That same day she brought to him a Master Evegault, who had just come out of a cheese, where he had been living a life of abstinence. He was an odd-looking old rat, a father confessor of great repute, very solidly-built and healthy-looking, with a fine black coat, slightly tonsured about the head by a scratch from a cat's claws. He was a serious rat, with a paunch like a monk, and he had made a great study of the scientific authorities by eating the Decretaliforme Papers, the Clementine documents and all sorts of other books, fragments of which still clung to his grey beard. In honour of his wisdom and high moral virtues, and out of respect for his exemplary life in the cheese, he was attended by a band of black rats, each with his own pretty little mouse—this was because the principles of the Chezil Council had not yet been adopted, and so they were allowed by law to have respectable ladies as their concubines. These

attendant rats and mice were ranged on either side of him in long lines, so that you would have thought it was a procession all the dignitaries of the University going to the Paris Fair. As they all had a good sniff at the food as they passed.

"When they had all found their places for the ceremony, the old rat cardinal took the floor and made an oration in mouse-Latin to prove to the shrewmouse that there was no higher authority than him except God himself, and that he owed obedience only to God, followed by a great many high-sounding phrases adorned by quotations from the Gospel, to obscure the issue and confuse his listeners—a number of persuasive arguments with a small basis of sound sense. He finished his speech with a peroration full of fine rolling phrases in praise of shrewmice in general, and especially of this particular shrewmouse, who, he said, was the best and cleverest of them all. The poor keeper of the granary was thoroughly dazzled by it all.

"The good fellow's head was quite turned, and he let these eloquent rats that had such honeyed tongues instal themselves in his barn, where they sang his praises night and day and made up songs in honour of him and of his lady too, kissing her little paw and sniffing her little rump. The lady knew that there were still some young rats who had not enough to eat, and she decided to finish the good work she had begun. So she was very loving with the shrewmouse and made much of him, indulging in all sorts of agreeable little tricks of which one alone would have been enough to capture his soul out of his body, and she complained to him that he wasted much of his precious time that might have been spent in making love in going out reconnoitring and looking after his granary. He was always out rushing about, she said, and she did not get her proper share of him. When she wanted him, he was out on the leads hunting cats. She wished him to be always near her ready for action and gentle as a bird. Then she pulled out a grey hair and wept and said that she was the most miserable mouse in the world. The shrewmouse assured her that she was the queen of his heart, but he did not say he would do as she asked. However, after a

flood of tears from the lady. He begged her to stop and promised to let her have her way. Then she quickly dried her eyes, gave him her paw to kiss, and advised him to arm some of the more experienced rats—old campaigners—who could be relied upon—so that they could go the rounds and keep an eye on everything for him. This was all duly arranged, and the shrewmouse had the rest of the day free for dancing, making merry, listening to the ballads and roundelays that the poets had written in his honour, playing the lute and the mandoline, doing acrobatics, and much eating and drinking.

"One day, not long after his mistress had been delivered of a fine mouse-shrewmouse and shrewmouse mouse—which ever is the right name for this love-child, which, of course, the rat lawyers had legitimized (here the Constable Montmorency, who had married his son to a legitimized natural daughter of the King, put his hand on his sword and gripped the hilt in a threatening way)—well, one day, there was a great party in the barn, a party that was more magnificent than any Court gala or banquet that has ever been seen, even on the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

"The mice were enjoying themselves thoroughly. Everywhere there was dancing, singing, drinking, eating, sarabands, music, gay songs and epithalamia. The rats had broken open the pots, uncovered the jars, knocked over the bottles, and rifled the store-cupboards. There were floods of mustard all over the place, the hams were mangled and the corn scattered. Everything was flowing, falling, rolling and tumbling on to the floor, and the baby rats were swimming about in the puddles of green sauce, the mice were ploughing through expanses of sweetmeats and the older ones were carrying off the pies. There were mice astride the salted beef tongues. There were fieldmice swimming in the pots, and the most cunning of them were carrying the corn back to their holes, taking advantage of the noise that was going on to feather their own nests. No one passed the Orleans quince preserve without having at least one nibble, if not two. It was a real Roman carnival. Anyone with sharp ears would have heard the frizzling of the frying-pans, the

cries and hullabaloo of the kitchens, the crackling of the fire, the grinding of the pestle and mortar, the bubbling of the cauldrons, the squeaking of the roasting-jacks, the creaking of barrels, the bustle of the confectioners, the click of the spits, and the scurrying of little feet pattering like hail across the floor. It was a bustling wedding-feast, people constantly coming and going, courtiers, footmen, grooms. Add to this the noise of the musicians and jesters, people paying their respects, soldiers beating their drums, and a general hubbub. They were all enjoying themselves so much that they kept it up all night. Then suddenly they heard the terrified step of Gargantua coming up the stairs of his house, and in a moment the floor and the rafters and everything else shake. Some of the old rats wondered what this noise was, and as they did not know what to make of it, they very wisely took themselves off, which was lucky for them, because the next minute the master of the house came in. When he saw the mess these gentlemen had made of his preserves and jars of food eaten, his mustard spoilt, and everything ruined, he stamped on those jolly vermin, without giving them time to squeak, and spoiled their best clothes, satins, pearl necklaces, bits and pieces, and everything, and upset the feast."

"And what happened to the shrewmouse?" asked the King, coming out of his brown study. "Ah, sire," answered Rabelais, "that was where the Gargantuan people were unfair. He was put to death, but, as he was of gentle birth, he was beheaded. It was unjust, because he had been tricked." "You go rather far, my man," said the King. "No, sire," replied Rabelais, "but perhaps rather high. For did you not place the pulpit higher than the crown? You asked me to give you a sermon, and I have given you one that is gospel truth." "Well, my fine vicar," said Madam Diana in his ear, "supposing I had a spiteful nature?" "Madam," said Rabelais, "was I then not right to warn the King, your master, against the Queen's Italian followers, who are as thick as flies here?" "Poor preacher," Cardinal Odet whispered in his ear, "you had better flee to another country." "Ah, my lord," replied the old man, "I shall indeed soon be in a very different country." "Ah, Mr. Scribbler," said the

Constable, whose son, as everyone knows, had treacherously abandoned Mademoiselle de Piennes, whom he was engaged to marry, for Diana of France, daughter of the King and a foreign lady. "How dare you attack such important persons? You're nothing but a bad poet who likes to raise himself above his fellows. Well, mark my words, I'll raise you to a higher place than you expect."

"We shall all go there in the end, Master Constable," he replied. "And if you were a true friend of the King and the State, you would thank me for warning him against the people of Lorraine, who will consume and destroy everything, if they get the chance." "My good man," Cardinal Charles of Lorraine whispered to him, "if you are in need of a few gold crowns to publish your fifth book of Pantagruel, let me provide them for you. You have done well to expose this vermin and all her tribe, who have battered on the King." "Well, gentlemen," said the King, "what did you think of his sermon?" "Sire," said Mellin de Saint-Gelais, realising that everyone was pleased with it, "I have never heard a better Pantagruel prophecy. Much do we owe to him who wrote these leonine verses in the Abbey of Thélème :

*Cy tous entret, qui le saint Evangile
En vers acile annoncez, quoy qu'on gronde,
Géant auez ung refuge et bastille
Contre l'hostile erreur qui tant postille
Par son faux stile empoisonner le monde.*

Each and every one of the courtiers joined in Rabelais' praises, and he left the Court, attended with great pomp by the King's pages, who carried their torches by special order to light his way.

Some people have accused François Rabelais, the foremost ornament of our country, of all sorts of spiteful monkey tricks quite unworthy of the Homeric philosophy of this prince of wisdom, this father of light, who, since he first began, has brought out a great number of wonderful books. Down with those who try to bring the master's name into disrepute! May those who have ignored this good wholesome fare always find grit between their teeth all their life long!



The Succubus

Prologue

Some citizens of the noble land of Touraine, fully aware of the keen research the Author makes into the antiquities, adventures, good tales and charming anecdotes of this blessed country, and taking him for an omniscient authority on things Tourainian, asked him, after a drink or two, of course, if he had found out the etymological reason for a street in Tours being called the Rue Chaulde—a fact which excited considerable curiosity amongst the women in the town. The Author replied that it came as a great surprise to him to see that the old inhabitants had forgotten the large number of convents housed in this street, in which the harsh asceticism of the monks and nuns had made the walls so hot that respectable women had been known to show signs of fruitful conception through having dallied there at dusk. A country gent of sorts, keen to show off knowledge, declared that formerly all the scandal-mongers of the town wagged their tongues there. Another got himself involved in the many intrica-

cies of science, and scandered off into a high fuluting discourse, which no one understood, qualifying each word, mixing classical phraseology with slang, muddling up usages, distilling the verbs, dispensing language-mixtures like a chemist, from the flood oncards, with Hebrew, Chaldaic, Egyptian, Greek, Latin and the rest, up to the time of Turnus who founded Tours; and rounded it all off by saying that Chould—without the H and the L—came from Cauda, and that lechery played a big part in it; all of which—except for this last particular—the ladies of the party listened to with deaf ears. An old man declared that there used to be a hot spring there, which his great-great-grandfather had once sampled. In fact, in as short a space of time as a fly would have taken to bite its neighbour's throat, a pocket-full of theories had been put forward in which the true origin of the name would have been less easily found than a louse in the filthy beard of a monk. But there was in the town a man of parts, well learned, having set foot in several monasteries, burned much midnight oil and read widely. He had amassed more historical fragments, works on dyptich, boxes of manuscripts, collections of charters and public registers on the history of Touraine than a gleaner garners sticks of straw in the month of August. This ancient, withered and gouty fellow who had been drinking silently in his corner, smiled wisely, knit his eyebrows, and followed it with a well-articulated "Rubbish!" which the Author heard and took to be the first birth-pangs of a tale rich in

The Origins of the Succubus

In nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

In the year A.D. 1271, I, Hierosme Cornille, grand inquisitor, ecclesiastical judge, holding my authority from the members of the Chapter of St. Maurice, the cathedral of Tours, conferred upon the following matter in the presence of our Lordship Jean de Monsoreau, archbishop, on the receipt of grievances and complaints from inhabitants of the town, whose petition will be appended herunto; noblemen and burghers, and common people of the diocese appeared before me, who made the following statements on the behaviour of a demon suspected of having assumed the appearance of a woman; this demon had tormented many souls in the diocese and had been locked up in the goal of the chapter house. It was with intent to find out whether there was any real ground for these complaints, that we opened the court on Monday, the 11th of December, after mass, in order to communicate all the complaints to the demon about the acts which are imputed to her, and to judge her according to the laws *contra daemones*.

For this trial I enlisted the aid of Guillaume Tournebouché, rubrican of the Chapter and a man of learning, to take note of all proceedings.

The first to appear before us was Jehan, surnamed Tortebras, licensed proprietor of the Swan Inn in the square by the bridge, who swore on the salvation of his soul, his hand on the Holy Scriptures, that he would not vouch for anything unless he had seen or heard it himself. He then made the following statement: "It happened about two years before the feast of St. Jehan, when the great bonfires are lit. A gentleman, unknown to me by sight, but without doubt one of the retinue of our Lord the King, and who had just returned from the Holy Land, came to see me with the proposition that I should let to him a country house which I

had built on feudal land belonging to the Chapter near the place called St. Etienne, which I therefore let him have on a nine years' lease for the agreed sum of three besants of fine gold.

"This lord then installed in the house a beautiful girl of his with the appearance of a woman and dressed in the foreign manner of the Saracens and Mohammedans. He did not allow anyone to see her or to get nearer to her than a bowshot, but I have seen her with my own eyes, with a head-dress of strange feathers, a complexion not of this world, and eyes brighter than I could ever describe, which blazed forth hellfire.

"This knight, who has since died, had threatened to kill anyone who looked as if they were spying round the house, so, fearing greatly for my life, I kept away from it, and until to-day I have kept strictly to myself any suspicions and doubts I may have had on the evil appearance of the foreign woman, who was more strange than any other foreign woman who had ever come my way.

"People of all sorts maintained at the time that the knight was in fact dead, and was only kept on his feet by various charms, philtres, spells and diabolic sorceries which this semblance of a woman, who wished to settle down in this country, administered to him. I must say that whenever I saw him his face looked so pale that I can only compare its colour to that of the wax of Easter candles; and to the knowledge of all those who frequented the Swan Inn, this knight had been put in his grave nine days after his arrival.

"According to his man servant the late knight had had continuous intercourse with the moorish woman during the whole of these nine days shut up in my house, without once coming out, which I heard the knight confess with horror on his deathbed. At the time some people maintained that the she-devil had kept the knight in her clutches by twining her long hair round him. This hair, they said, was furnished with those warm properties through which the fire of hell is brought to Christians in the form of love, and which makes them continually crave for satisfaction until their souls are drawn from their bodies and won over to Satan. But I never saw any evidence for this, except the sight of the gentleman in question

dying, all his strength gone out of him, his body wasted and unable to move, but wishing still, in spite of the presence of the priest, to return to his mistress. He was recognised as the Lord de Bueil, who had been on the Crusade, and who, according to some of the townspeople, was under the charms of a demon with whom he had become acquainted in the asiatic country of Damascus.

"Well, after this, I left my house in the hands of this unknown lady, under the conditions laid down in the lease agreement. At the death of the Lord de Bueil I did however go back once, to ask the foreign woman whether she intended staying in it, and after much trouble I was led to her by a strange man, a negro, half naked with white eyes. Then I saw the moorish woman sitting on a Persian carpet in a brilliantly lit room glittering with gold and precious stones. She was lightly clad, and by her sat another man fast losing his soul to her. I had not the strength of mind to keep looking at her, for if I had, her eyes would at once have incited me to yield to her; already the music of her voice had begun to send thrilling shivers through my belly, making my head whirl and seducing my soul. Seeing the way things were going, and in fear of God—and the devil—I at once took to my heels, deciding to stay away from my house as long as she liked to stay in it. It was as dangerous as that to look upon her moorish skin which radiated hell fires, and to hear her voice which vibrated through my heart; not to mention her feet which were smaller than any normal woman's could rightly be. Since then I have no longer troubled myself to return to my house, being in great fear of falling into hell. And that is all I have to say."

We then showed the witness Tortebras a man of Abyssinian or Nubian descent, who, black from head to foot, was found to lack those signs of virility with which Christians are naturally provided. This negro, having persevered in his silence after he had been tormented, and several times tortured—not without a deal of moaning—had been pronounced ignorant of our native tongue. Tortebras recognised this Abyssinian heretic as

having lived in his house as companion to the demon spirit. He is also suspected of having assisted her in her sorceries.

Then Tortebras confessed his complete Catholic faith, and declared that he knew nothing more of the matter apart from various rumours which were common knowledge, and which he had only witnessed in so far as he had heard tell of them from others.

The next witness was Mathieu, called Cognefestu, a day labourer of the St. Etienne estate, who appeared before us as summoned, and took the oath on the Holy Scriptures. He said that he had always seen bright lights in the foreign woman's house and heard much uproarious and diabolic laughter on feast and fast days and nights, notably in Holy Week and at Christmas time, as if a large number of people were in the house. He had also seen, so he said, green buds of all sorts bursting magically into flower by the windows of the house, particularly roses in frosty weather, and other things which required great heat for growth; but he was not at all astonished at this because the foreign woman radiated so much warmth that whenever she went for a walk in the evening by the side of his garden wall, he found his lettuce in full leaf next day; and sometimes by the mere touch of her skirt she had made the sap rise in the trees and the branches grow. Finally the witness Cognefestu declared that he knew nothing more about her, seeing that he worked from early morning and went to bed when the chickens went to roost.

Cognefestu's wife then took the oath. She was asked to substantiate as far as she could everything which had so far come to light in the trial. But she had nothing but praises for the foreign woman because, so she said, since her arrival her husband had treated her better, owing to the proximity of this good lady who filled the air with love, as the sun fills it with light. This witness also made other frivolous, incongruous remarks which we have not committed to writing.

The unknown African was shown to Cognefestu and his wife, who said they had seen him in the gardens of the house, and that there was no doubt that he was in the demon's service.

The third witness to appear before us was Sir Harduin, the fifth Lord de Maille, who replied with good grace to the humble request that he should openly declare his faith in the religion of the Church, and who, of his own free will, pledged his word as a gallant knight to say nothing but what he had seen with his own eyes.

He then declared that he had known the demon in question when he was in the Army of the Crusade, and had seen the late Lord de Bueil fight a duel at close quarters for the monopoly of her. The wench or demon in question, belonged at the time to the fourth Sir Geoffroy, Lord de la Roche Pozay, who used to say that he had brought her from Touraine, although she was of Saracen descent; the French knights marvelled at this as they did at her beauty, which excited much talk and a thousand and one scandals in the camp. During the voyage, this wench was the cause of several murders, for already Roche Pozay had quarrelled with some of the Crusaders who had pretensions on her sole rights, because, according to certain of the lords whom she had made love to in secret, she provided most unusual pleasures. But finally, the Lord de Bueil killed Geoffroy de la Roche Pozay, and became lord and master of the young murderess, putting her in a convent or harem according to Saracen custom. Previously she was seen and heard chattering at her entertainments in a thousand foreign dialects, Arabic, Greek as spoken in the Roman Empire, Moorish, and French, which she spoke more fluently than those with the most expert knowledge of French tongues in the Christian host, from which sprang the belief that she was a witch.

Sir Harduin confessed that he had never tilted for her in the Holy Land—not through fear or indifference or for any other reason; but he believed that he had been saved from her clutches because he always carried a piece of the true Cross on him, and because he had a mistress of good Greek breeding who saved him from this danger by draining his love night and morning, and by taking substantially everything from him for herself, left him no heart or anything else for others.

The witness certified that the woman living in Tortebras' country

house and the Saracen who came to Syria were one and the same person; he was sure of this because he had been invited to a feast at her house by the young Lord de Croixmare, who died seven days later. Croixmare's mother, the Lady de Croixmare, had told him that her son had been completely ruined by the girl, whose physical demands had destroyed his vitality, and whose wild and extravagant whims had squandered his fortune.

We then asked him, in his quality of a man of good judgment, wisdom and authority in the country, what his opinion of the woman was, and called upon him to lay bare his conscience, seeing that the case was a most serious one, in the light of Christian faith and divine justice; to which he replied that some of the Crusaders had told him that this she-devil was always a virgin to each of her bedfellows, and that Mammon doubtless busied himself in renewing her virginity for every new lover. He had also heard innumerable extravagant stories besides from men in their cups, which were hardly suitable for inclusion in a fifth gospel. But he certainly had to admit that, old knight as he was, at the turn of life and no longer aware of certain pleasures, he had felt like a young man at this last dinner with which the Knight de Croixmare had regaled him; the demon's voice had gone straight to his heart before flowing into his ears, and had roused so strong a passion in his body, that all his life began to flow away from him into the place from which life comes; finally, without the assistance of Cyprus wine which he drank to shut his eyes and to put him to sleep under the table, in order to escape from the sight of the flashing eyes of his diabolic hostess, and to stop the ache of longing in his heart, he would without doubt have fallen out with young Croixmare and fought with him for the chance of having once in his life the pleasure of this supernatural woman. Since which he had taken care to go and confess his evil thoughts. Later, he had had counsel from on high, and had wedded himself again to his holy relic of the true Cross, confining himself to his mansion; where, in spite of all his Christian precautions, the magic voice sometimes murmured in his brain, and often in the morning he remembered

this demon for her warmth, soft and close like the glow from a sulphur flame. And because the sight of this girl roused him so much that it made him burn like a young man again, though he was almost in the grave, and because it had once much upset and misplaced his vitality, the knight asked us not to confront him with this empress of love, who, if she were not a devil, had been favoured by God with the most extraordinary licence in her dealings with men. The knight then withdrew after reading his statement, but not without first recognising the African we have mentioned as the slave and page of the lady.

The fourth witness to appear was a Jew called Salomon al Ratschild, to whom we had pledged our word in the name of the Chapter and of our Lord Archbishop, that he would not be cross-questioned, tortured or inconvenienced in any thing or in any way, or summoned to give further evidence after his statement (in consideration of the journeys involved in his business) and that he would be allowed to withdraw in perfect freedom. This Jew, in spite of the infamy of his person and his Judaism, was only heard by us because of our one desire to know all we could of the past conduct of the demon. This Salomon was, of course, not asked to take any oath, being outside the Church and separated from us by the blood of our Saviour (*trucidatus Salvator inter nos*). Asked why he appeared without the green cap on his head and the mark of the yellow wheel over his heart, according to the instructions laid down by Church and King, al Ratschild showed us letters patent absolving him from these obligations granted by Royal favour and recognised as such by the Seneschal of Touraine and Poitou.

The Jew then declared that he had done much business with the lady living in the house of Tortebras the innkeeper. He had sold her, he said, chandeliers with many branches cunningly engraved, plates of gilded silver, goblets richly jewelled, emeralds and rubies; he had brought for her from the Levant a quantity of precious stuffs, Persian carpets, silks and fine cloth; such magnificent things, in fact, that no queen in Christendom could claim to be better supplied with jewels and household goods. And for his part he had

received 300,000 good royal pounds from her in payment for the rare merchandise which he had brought for her, such as flowers from India, popinjays, birds, feathers, spices, wines from Greece, and diamonds.

We then asked him whether he had procured for her any ingredients for the performance of acts of magic, blood of newly born children, books of magic, or any of the things which make up the usual stock-in-trade of witches. We promised him that any part played by him in such transactions which might be revealed by his confession, would not involve him in any further summons or enquiry. Al Ratschild swore upon his Hebrew faith that he never handled any of that sort of business. He explained that his high interests put him above bothering with such trifles; he was financial agent to some very powerful lords, including the Marquis de Montferrat, the King of England, the King of Cyprus, and various German gentlemen besides. He owned all sorts of merchant galleys going into Egypt with the Sultan's permission, and he traded in precious articles of gold and silver which often brought him into Tours on business with the exchange. He declared that he considered the lady in question to be a most upright and natural woman, sweeter and more delicately made than any woman he had ever seen. He knew the reputation she had of having the devil in her, and inspired by wild imagination and also because he was taken with her, he had, one day when she was without a husband, made certain proposals to her to which she had readily agreed. But although he had for a long time after that night felt his bones out of joint and his bowels crushed, he had not shared the experience of others who said that whoever fell into her clutches never escaped from them, dissolving like lead in the crucible of an alchemist.

We then let the witness Salomon go, according to the terms of the safe-conduct, in spite of the last item in his statement which gave most striking proof of his close relations with the devil, seeing that he emerged unscathed from an ordeal which overwhelmed Christians who had experienced it. Before withdrawing, he pro-

posed the following agreement. If the demon in woman's form was condemned to be burnt alive, he offered to redeem her with a ransom large enough to complete the tallest tower of the church of St. Maurice which is now being built.

This proposal was noted for consideration at a suitable time by the assembled Chapter. Salomon then left the court without agreeing to tell us where he lived, but informing us that any decision which the Chapter might make could be communicated to him by a Jew of Tours called Tobie Nathaneu. Before going, he was shown the African whom he recognized as the demon's page. He said that it was a Saracen custom to deprive their slaves in this way and then to use them as guards over their women according to ancient custom, evidence for which was to be found in the works of local profane historians, in the works of Narsez, general of Constantinople, and elsewhere.

Next day, after mass, we heard the fifth witness, the most noble and highly respected Lady de Croixmare. She took the oath on the Holy Gospels, and then told us with tears in her eyes, how she had buried her eldest son, who had died as a result of the extravagant love affair he had had with this female demon. This nobleman was twenty-three years old, well complexioned, most virile and well-bearded, like his dead father before him. In spite of his great vigour, in ninety days he had gradually faded away, ruined by his affair with the Succubus of the Rue Chaulde, which is what she is vulgarly called. Her maternal authority had no influence with him, and towards the end in his last days he looked like a poor dried worm such as housewives find in a corner when they are sweeping out the living rooms. As long as he had strength enough to go to her, he returned again and again to waste away his strength with this cursed woman, and to squander his fortune upon her. When eventually he was laid in his bed and realised that the end was near, he swore, cursed and threatened and heaped a thousand insults on them all, on sister, brother and on his mother; rebelled in the presence of the Chaplain, denied God and desired to die damned, which was all most painful to the family servants,

who, to save his soul and to deliver him from hell, founded two masses to be held annually in the cathedral. Besides which, to obtain burial for him in consecrated ground, the house of de Croixmare undertook to provide the Chapter for a hundred years with candles for the chapels and the Church on Easter Day.

The Lady said, in conclusion, that apart from the wicked words overheard by the reverend Don Louis Pot, a monk from Marmoustiers, who had come in order to be near the Baron de Croixmare in his last hours, she had never heard her son mention the demon who had brought him so much misfortune. Upon which the noble and most respected Lady withdrew in deep mourning.

The sixth witness was called after adjournment of the court. She was Jacquette, known as "Old Greasy," a kitchen wench who went to houses to wash and dry dishes, and lived at that time in the Fishmarket. She swore not to say anything which she did not know to be true and then made the following statement. One day, she said, she had gone to work in the kitchen of the demon, who did not terrify her in the least because her diet seemed to consist only of men. She had had leisure time enough to look into the garden where she saw the she-devil walking, superbly dressed, in the company of a knight with whom she was laughing like a normal woman. It was then that she recognised the demon's exact likeness to the moorish girl who had been put as a nun in the Convent of Nostre Dame de L'Esgrignolles by the now deceased Seneschal of Touraine and Poitou, Count Bruyn de la Roche-Gorbon. This moorish woman had been substituted eighteen years before by the gypsies for the statue of Our Lady the Virgin, Mother of Our Blessed Saviour, which they had stolen. At the time of trouble for Touraine, of which no historical records are available, this little girl of about twelve years old was saved from the stake where she was to be burnt by being baptised, and the Seneschal and his wife were godparents to this child of hell. The witness was then laundress at the convent, and remembered the escape which the gypsy girl had made twenty months after her admission to the convent—an escape so cunningly made that it had never been discovered how

she had contrived it. It was generally believed that with the aid of the devil she had flown away through the air; because in spite of all investigations, no trace of her flight could be found in the convent, where everything remained in its usual place. The African was then shown to the kitchen wench, who declared she had never seen him, although she had been curious to, because it was his job to guard the place where the moorress forayed with those on whom she nourished herself by draining them through the spigot.

The seventh witness was then brought before us. He was Hugues du Fou, son of the Lord de Bridore, a man twenty years old who had been bailed out by his father on surety of the family estates. He was shown by his father into the court, by which he was being further detained in order to be tried and sentenced in due course, for having, with the assistance of several unknown and bad young men, laid siege to the jail of the Archbishop and of the Chapter, and of having attempted to undermine the power of ecclesiastical justice by contriving the escape of the demon in question. In spite of his evil disposition, we commanded the witness, Hugues du Fou, to give a true report of all he knew about the demon with whom he was strongly reputed to have had commerce, pointing out to him that his own salvation as well as the life of the demon woman were in question. After taking the oath he said, "I swear by my eternal salvation and by the Holy Gospels, which lie beneath my hand, that the woman suspected of being a devil is in my opinion an angel, a woman who is perfect in her soul even more than in her body; that she lives quite honestly, is full of dainty ways and the greatest finesses of love, and that she is not wicked at all, but generous, always helping the poor and suffering. I declare that I saw her shed genuine tears over the death of my friend Lord de Croixmare. She vowed to Our Lady the Virgin that day that she would never again allow herself to be loved by young men of noble breeding because they were too weak in her service. In obedience to this vow she has with constancy and great courage denied me the pleasure of her body, and has only favoured me with the love and possession of her heart, of which she has

made me sovereign lord. Since bestowing this gracious gift me, in spite of my mounting passion, she has remained abiding in her house, where I have passed most of my days, happy and hear her. But though I supped close to her, sharing the air she breathed, and the light which showed up the beauty of her face, and found more pleasure there than the lords of Paradise had, and though I have elected her to be my lady always, and chosen her to be one day my own dear one, my wife, and my sweetheart, I, poor fool, have had no advance from her on the point to come, but have on the contrary been given a thousand virtuous counsels, such as that I should acquire fame as a good knight, become a strong, handsome man and fear nothing save God; that I should be faithful to one only, loving the rest because of her. When labours of war had made me strong, if she still pleased me, then only would she be mine. She said she would know how to wait for it, because she loved me so much."

Saying this, the young Sir Hugues began to weep; then with tears in his eyes he added, "I thought of her graciousness and her fragility, and remembered how her arms always seemed too fragile to support the light weight of her golden chains, and I could not restrain myself when I thought of her bruised by iron chains, weighed down by a treacherous load of misery; that is why I wept. I have a right to make my grief known to justice, because my life is so closely bound to that of my mistress and sweetheart that if ever she comes to any harm, then surely I shall die."

The young nobleman then praised the demon in a thousand ways which only proved how outrageously her witchcraft had been practised on him, and showed evidence of the abominable, disgusting and plaguesome life he was leading, and the fraudulent sorcery to which he was subordinated. Our Lord Archbishop was later to sit in judgment upon him, and efforts would be made with exorcisms and repentance to save the soul of this young man from the snares of hell, provided the devil had not too great a hold on him. We then handed back the young man into the care of the noble lord his father, after he had recognised the African as the servant of the accused.

The eighth witness was conducted towards us in great state by the personal guards of our Lord Archbishop; she was the Most High and Reverend Lady Jacqueline de Champchevrier, Abbess of the Convent of Notre Dame under the Carmelite Order. It was in her charge that the former Seneschal of Tours, father of Monseigneur the Count de la Roche-Garbon, current legal adviser to the Convent, had placed the gypsy woman baptised at the font as Blanche Bruyn. We gave the Lady Abbess a summary of the trial which concerned the Holy Church, the glory of God, the perpetual happiness of the people of this diocese afflicted with a demon, as well as the life of a creature, who was possibly quite innocent. Then when the facts of the case had been explained, we asked the noble Lady Abbess to tell the court all she knew about the magic disappearance of her daughter in God, Blanche Bruyn, married to our Saviour under the name of Sister Clare.

The most noble, high and mighty Lady Abbess then made the following statement :

"The Sister Clare, of whose origin I was ignorant, but whose father and mother were suspected of having been heretics and enemies of God, was in fact placed as a nun in the Convent of which I, in spite of my unworthiness, had been canonically appointed to be governor. This sister served her period as a novice resolutely, and made her vows according to the holy rule of the Order. But as soon as they had been made she fell into great sadness, and became very pale and wan. When I asked her about her melancholic illness, the Sister told me tearfully that she did not know the cause of it; she said that a thousand and one tears welled up in her at no longer feeling her beautiful hair on her head; besides this, she said, she thirsted for air, and could not resist the desire to jump into the trees and climb in them, and to frolic as she had been accustomed to do in her open-air life; she cried away the nights, dreaming of the forests beneath whose foliage she had been wont to sleep; and remembering all these things, she felt oppressed by the close air of the convent which, she said, troubled her breathing; she was filled with unhealthy vapours and sometimes in church her mind was

upset by thoughts which distracted her. Then I repeated to the unhappy girl the holy teachings of the Church, and reminded her of the eternal happiness which women without sin enjoy in paradise. I told her how transitory this earthly life was and how certain the goodness of God who, in exchange for the loss of a few bitter pleasures, bore for us a love without end. But in spite of all this sensible motherly advice, she persisted in her evil state of mind. During the services and at prayer time her attention still wandered through the windows of the Church to the leaves on the trees and the grass in the meadows outside; she purposely and with malicious intent made herself as pale as a sheet, so that she could stay in bed; and then sometimes she scampered about the cloisters like a nanny goat just loosed from its tether. In the end she grew thin, lost her wonderful looks, and withered away. When I, her Abbess and mother, saw her in this state, I feared she was going to die, and had her transferred to the Convent sick room. One winter's morning she disappeared without leaving any traces of her flight, no doors had been broken open, no latches forced, no windows opened. There was nothing to show which way she had gone—a terrible escapade this, in which she was believed to have been helped by the demon which tortured and tormented her. The authorities of the metropolitan Church came to the conclusion that the devil had sent this daughter of his to distract the nuns from their saintly ways, but that struck dumb by the beauty of their lives, she had returned through the air to the revels of the witches, who, wishing to make a mockery of our holy religion, had left her originally in the niche where the statue of the Virgin Mary had stood."

Her statement ended, the Lady Abbess was by order of our Lord Archbishop, accompanied with great honour back to the Convent of Mount Carmel.

The ninth witness then took the stand. He was Joseph Leschalopier, a money changer, living up river from the bridge at the sign of the Golden Besant. After swearing by his Catholic faith to testify truly to all he knew about the subject of the trial before the ecclesiastical tribunal, he made the following statement :

"I am an unfortunate father—who has suffered very much through the holy will of God. Before the coming of the Succubus of the Rue Chaulde, I had a son, who was my pride and joy, as handsome as a nobleman, as learned as a clerk, with more than a dozen foreign voyages to his credit—he was a good Catholic besides, and had always kept away from the harmful lusts of love, putting aside all ideas of marriage because he realised that he was the mainstay of my old age, the light of my life, and my constant delight. He was a son of whom a King of France would have been proud, a good and courageous man; he inspired my work and made my house happy—in fact he was a priceless treasure to me—for I am all alone in this world, having had the misfortune to lose my wife, and I'm too old now in any case to have any more children. But the demon has taken my son, my priceless treasure, from me, my lord, and has put him in hell. Yes, it's true, noble judge, as soon as my poor son set eyes on this sharp-edged slut, this insatiable wrecking-shop of a she-devil, full of sinful contact and sordid delight, he stuck fast to her glue-pot of love. From then onwards he lived between the columns of Venus, and did not live there long, for nothing can quench the thirst of that gulf, so great a heat is engendered in it, and even if you plunged the seed of the whole world into it, it would still be thirsty. Alas! then, my poor boy, his money bags, his hopes of a family, his chances of eternity, his whole self, nay, more than that, were swallowed up in this estuary like a grain of corn in the jaws of a bull. And so I became an orphan in my old age. I tell you there is only one joy left for me in the world—and that is to see this demon burned alive, this demon, I say, who has nourished herself on lustre and gore, this tarantula who has seduced more married men and sucked the life out of more marriages, more young families, more hearts, more Christians, than there are lepers in all the lazarettes in Christendom. Burn and
this vampire who sups on souls, this bl
lamp of passion filled with the venom of
this pit whose depths no man can fathom
the Chapter to build the stake, and my art

her and guard her well, my lord judge, for she burns brighter than any earthly flame; all the fires of hell are nursed in her lap, the strength of Samson is in her hair, and heavenly music murmurs in her voice. She charms but to slay the body and the soul at one stroke, she smiles but to bite, she sleeps but to devour, she would in fact seduce a saint and make him deny God. My son! my son! where is the flower of my life now, cut from its stem as with scissors by this needlecase of a woman! Ah, why did you summon me, my lord? Who can restore my son to me, whose soul has soaked into a womb which gives death to all and life to none? Only the devil spawns without issue. That is my evidence, which I pray Master Tournebouche to write down without omitting an iota of it, and then to let me have a copy of it so that every evening, telling it to God in my prayers, I may make the blood of an innocent man cry out perpetually in his ears, and obtain from His infinite mercy the pardon of my son."

There are twenty-seven other statements after this, which it would be much too tiresome to transcribe literally, impartially and in their full length; their inclusion here would drag out the length and obscure the thread of this curious trial; for this is a tale which obeying the ancient precepts should go straight to the point, like a bull to his principal office. So here, in a few words, is the gist of these testimonies.

A large number of good Christians, townsmen and townswomen, inhabitants of the noble town of Tours, declared variously that this demon had held wedding feasts and regal entertainments daily, that she had never been seen in any church, that she had blasphemed, had made fun of the priests, and had not crossed herself anywhere; that she could speak all the languages of the world, a gift which God had only granted to the holy apostles; that several times she had been met in the fields, mounted on an unknown animal which rode before the clouds; that she never grew old and her face was always young; that she had loosened her girdle for father and son in the same day, saying that her door did not sin. Evil influences were said to flow visibly from her, because a pastry-cook, sitting

one evening on a bench by his door and catching sight of her, had received such a gust of warm love, that going indoors he had gone to bed, set passionately on his wife, and had been found dead next day still in full spate.

The old men of the town had gone to spend the rest of their days and their fortunes at her ever-open door, to taste the sins of their youth again, and they died there like flies on their bellies, some of them turning as black as moors while they died. The demon, it was said, ate alone, and never let herself be seen at dinner, lunch or supper, because she lived on human brains. Several people had seen her go into the cemeteries at night and embrace the corpses of young men: for only thus, it was said, could she assuage the devil who stamped about in her entrails, and thundered about there like a tempest; and that this was the cause of these caustic, biting, burning, squeezing, clutching, violent and diabolic movements, those tight embraces, those twistings and writhings of love and voluptuousness, from which several men had emerged blue with bruises, torn, marked, bitten and crushed. Since the time of our Saviour, who had locked up the master devil in the bellies of the swine, the world had not seen an evil beast so sinful, poisonous, and with such sharp claws as she; so much so, that if the whole town of Tours had been thrown into this field of Venus, it would have turned into seedlings of cities and the demon would have swallowed it like a strawberry.

There are a thousand more statements, remarks and testimonies after this, which clearly indicate the infernal pedigree of this devil's woman, daughter, sister, grandmother, wife, whore, brother or whatever she is, and provide ample evidence of the mischiefs and disasters which she propagated in every family. If there were and space to set them out here in the same systematic way were originally set out by the good fellow to whom we owe their discovery, they would sound rather like a sample of the cries of horror uttered by the Egyptians on the day of the seventh plague. Master Guillaume Tournebouché greatly distinguished himself by

his written account of the proceedings in which all the memoranda are quoted.

In the tenth recess the enquiry was closed. It was by then ripe with evidence, bristling with authentic testimonies, bulging with particulars, complaints, interdicts, contradictions, charges, writs, verifications, public and private avowals, oaths, adjournments, appearances, controversies, to all of which the demon would have to reply. All over the town people were saying that, if she really was a she-devil and furnished with horns hidden somewhere inside her with which she quenched her thirst, drinking men and destroying them, she might swim in this sea of writing for a long time before being landed, safe and sound, in hell.

How the Court dealt with the Demon Woman

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

In the year of our Lord 1271, the following appeared before me, Hiérosme Cornille, grand inquisitor and canonically appointed ecclesiastical judge to this case :

Lord Philippe d'Ydré, Bailiff of the town and city of Tours and province of Touraine, living in his mansion in the Rue de la Rostiserie at Chasteauneuf; Master Jehan Ribon, President of the Brotherhood and Company of Drapers, living on the Quay de Bretaingne, at the sign of St.-Pierre-ez-liens; My Lord Antoyne Jahan, Alderman, Chief of the Brotherhood of Money Changers, living in the square by the bridge at the sign of St. Mark (counting out Tourainian pounds); Master Martin Beaupertuys, Captain of the City Archers, living at the castle; Jehan Rabelais, ships'-painter and boatmaker, living at the port of the island of St. Jacques, treasurer of the Brotherhood of the Mariners of the Loire; Marc Hiérosme, called Maschefer, hosier, Guild President, living at the sign of Ste. Sébastienne, and Jacques de Villedomer, master publican, vine-grower, living in the main street at the Pomme de Pin.

We read over to the Lord d'Ydré, bailiff, and to these men of Tours the following petition, which they had written, signed and deliberated upon, before submitting it to the attention of the ecclesiastical tribunal.

Petition

"We, the undersigned, citizens of Tours, have met in the mansion of his worship the Lord d'Ydré, Bailiff of Touraine, in the absence of our Mayor; and have requested him to hear complaints and charges which the following facts inspire us to bring, with great insistence, before the ecclesiastical tribunal, the judge of crimes connected with the Church, to whom this memorandum on parchment of the cause which we represent is to be consigned.

"For a long time now an evil demon under a woman's aspect has been in the town; she lives in the parish of St. Etienne in the house of Tortebra the innkeeper, which lies inside the Chapter's feudal lands, and being in the Archbishop's domain comes under his temporal jurisdiction. This foreign woman carries on her trade of harlot in a downright and abusive manner, and propagates so many misdeeds that she threatens to ruin the Catholic faith in this town, because those that go to her come away with their souls quite lost, and refuse with a thousand scandalous remarks the assistance of the Church.

"Moreover, considering how many of her bedfellows have died, and that having arrived in our town with no other possessions than her good looks, she now possesses infinite riches, treasures fit for a king, which she is strongly suspected of having acquired through witchcraft, if not through robberies, carried out with the aid of the magical attractions of her supernaturally amorous person;

"Considering that the honour and security of our families are at stake, and that the country has never seen a body-crazed woman, or a daughter of pleasure carrying on her business of whore with so much detriment, and threatening so brazenly and harshly the lives, savings, customs, chastity, religion and everything else of the inhabitants of this town;

"Considering that an enquiry is needed into her person, her goods and her behaviour, in order to ascertain whether these results of her love-making are legitimate or whether they are the manifestations of an evil design of the devil's, as her actions would lead one to suppose; for Satan often comes to visit Christendom disguised as a woman (as the scriptures reveal when they say that our blessed Saviour was carried up into a mountain from which Lucifer or Astaroth showed him the rich lands of Judaea), and succubi or demons with women's faces have been seen in several places, who, having no desire to return to hell, and having an insatiable fire within them, seek to refresh and sustain themselves by sucking in souls;

"And considering that the evidence for devilry accumulated against her is legion, and that some of the inhabitants talk openly of its manifestations, and that it will serve a useful purpose for the woman's peace and quiet if the matter is cleared up, so that she is not sought out and set upon by any of the people who have been ruined as a result of her wickedness;

"Considering all these things, we pray that it will please you to submit the account of misfortunes of his suffering flock to our spiritual lord and father of this diocese, the most noble and holy Archbishop Jehan de Monsoreau, so that he may reflect upon it.

"If you do this you will be carrying out the duties of your office, just as we are carrying out ours as guardians of the town's safety, each one of us keeping track of the things which are his responsibility in his quarter.

"We signed the above, after mass, on All Saints' Day in the year of our Lord 1271."

When Master Tournebouche had finished reading out this petition, I, Hiérosme Cornille, asked the petitioners: "Sirs, do you persist in your statements? Do you know of any other evidence apart from what you have communicated to us? And do you undertake to uphold the truth of this before God, before men and before the accused?"

All, with the exception of Master Jehan Rabelais, persevered in their belief. Rabelais withdrew his signature from the document, saying that in his opinion the moorress was a natural woman, a good wench, with no other fault than that she suffered from a very high love temperature.

I, as judge appointed to the case, deliberated well, and found matter in the petition on which to take action; I ordered that proceedings should begin against the woman imprisoned in the Chapter house jail, by all legal methods, as prescribed in the canons and ordinances *contra daemonios*.

My orders to this effect set out in the form of a writ will be published by the town crier in all quarters, to the sound of a trumpet,

in order to inform everybody of them, and so that all may give evidence according to their knowledge, and be confronted by the demon, who is to be provided finally with a counsel for the defence, according to custom. And the interrogations and the trial are to be conducted in a proper manner.

Signed *Hiérosme Cornille*,
and lower down *Tournebousche*.

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

In A.D. 1271, on the tenth day of February, after mass, by order of me, Hiérosme Cornille, ecclesiastical judge, the woman apprehended in the house of Tortebras the innkeeper, was taken from the Chapter house jail and brought before the court. The house where she was living lies inside the property belonging to the Chapter of St. Maurice Cathedral, and she is thus subject to the temporal and seigniorial jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Tours; besides which the nature of the crimes of which she is charged is such, that she is liable to the tribunal and council of ecclesiastical justice. These facts were explained to her so that she should not be ignorant of them.

She then read seriously, in full, and with good understanding, first the Petition from the town, and then all the statements, complaints, accusations and accounts of proceedings already taken, included in twenty-two notebooks written up by Master Tournebousche (of which an account has already been given). Dedicating ourselves to God, and with the assistance of God and the Church, we resolved to find out the truth, and began by interrogating the accused.

The first question I asked her was, "In what country or town were you born?" To which she replied: "In Mauretania." I then asked: "Have you a father or mother, or are you without parents?" She replied: "I never knew my parents." The following dialogue then ensued: "What is your name?" "Zulma—it's an Arabic name." "How is it that you speak our language?" "Because I came to this country." "When?" "About twelve years ago."

"How old were you then?" "Fifteen or thereabouts." "Then you admit to being twenty-seven years old now?" "Yes."

"You are then the moorish girl who was found in the niche of the statue of our Lady the Virgin, and was subsequently baptised by the Archbishop, being held at the font by the late Lord de la Roche-Corbon and his wife, the Lady d'Azay, who then put her as a nun in the convent of Mount Carmel, where she made vows of chastity, poverty, silence and love of God, with the divine assistance of St. Clare?" "That is so." "Do you acknowledge the truth of the statements made by the most noble and illustrious Lady Abbess of Mount Carmel nunnery, and the truth also of what was said by the kitchen wench Jacqueline, called 'Old Greasy'?" "For the most part, yes." "Then you are a Christian?" "Yes, father."

Thereupon I asked her to make the sign of the Cross and to take holy water from a little bowl which Guillaume Tournebouché placed near her hand; and when I had seen her do this, it was registered as a fact that Zulma the Moor, called Blanche Bruyn in our country, nun of the convent under the Carmelite Order where she has been named Sister Claire, and suspected of having the false appearance of a woman in whom there was said to be a demon, had made an act of religion in my presence and had thus recognised the justice of the ecclesiastical tribunal.

I then addressed the following words to her: "My child, the manner of your flight from the convent has excited the strongest suspicions that you had recourse to the devil, for it was in every way a most extraordinary and supernatural escape."

The accused replied that she had left the convent in the most natural way; one afternoon after vespers, she had slipped out through the street door and had made her way to the fields, cloaked in robes belonging to Don Jehan de Marsilis, the convent visitor. He had put her in a hovel belonging to him in Cupidon Lane, near one of the city towers. Here he had proceeded thoroughly and at great length to teach her the delights of love, of which she had been quite unaware up to then. She had taken a strong liking to these pleasures, finding them most enjoyable. The Lord d'Amboise

had then caught sight of her at the window of this shack and had fallen heavily in love with her. Later, loving him with more heart than the monk, she had fled from the hovel where Don Marsilis kept her for his own profit and pleasure, and had gone in great haste to Amboise, the Lord's castle, where she had had a thousand pastimes, hunting, dancing and clothes fit for a queen. One day Lord Amboise had invited Lord de la Roche-Pozay to come and dine and enjoy himself, and unknown to the accused he had allowed his guest to peep at her as she stepped naked from her bath. At sight of her thus, Lord de la Roche-Pozay had fallen passionately in love with her, and next day he had defeated Lord d'Amboise in single combat; then in spite of her tears he had dragged her off with great violence to the Holy Land where she had led the life of a woman much loved and respected for her beauty. After many adventures, said the accused, she had returned to France and Touraine, in spite of her apprehensions of misfortune, because it was the wish of her lord and master the Baron de Bueil who was dying of homesickness in Asia, and longed to see his family mansion again. He had promised her that he would save her from any peril she might be in, and she had believed him and trusted him because she loved him most dearly. But on arriving in this country, Lord de Bueil had been taken ill and had died most lamentably without any attempt to cure himself, in spite of the fervent requests which she had made to him—without any success, because he hated doctors, master surgeons and apothecaries. This, said the accused, was the whole truth.

I asked her whether she then held the statements of the good Lord Harduin and of the innkeeper Tortebras to be true.

She admitted that they were true for the most part, but she added that some parts of them were evilly inspired, slanderous, and stupid.

Then I asked her: "Do you admit to have loved and copulated with all the noblemen, burghers and the rest with whom, according to the complaints and declarations of the inhabitants you have had

and she brazenly replied: "Love, yes, I have
fornication."

had then caught sight of her at the window of this shack and had fallen heavily in love with her. Later, loving him with more heart than the monk, she had fled from the hovel where Don Marsilis kept her for his own profit and pleasure, and had gone in great haste to Amboise, the Lord's castle, where she had had a thousand pastimes, hunting, dancing and clothes fit for a queen. One day Lord Amboise had invited Lord de la Roche-Pozay to come and dine and enjoy himself, and unknown to the accused he had allowed his guest to peep at her as she stepped naked from her bath. At sight of her thus, Lord de la Roche-Pozay had fallen passionately in love with her, and next day he had defeated Lord d'Amboise in single combat; then in spite of her tears he had dragged her off with great violence to the Holy Land where she had led the life of a woman much loved and respected for her beauty. After many adventures, said the accused, she had returned to France and Touraine, in spite of her apprehensions of misfortune, because it was the wish of her lord and master the Baron de Bueil who was dying of homesickness in Asia, and longed to see his family mansion again. He had promised her that he would save her from any peril she might be in, and she had believed him and trusted him because she loved him most dearly. But on arriving in this country, Lord de Bueil had been taken ill and had died most lamentably without any attempt to cure himself, in spite of the fervent requests which she had made to him without any success, because he hated doctors, master surgeons and apothecaries. This, said the accused, was the whole truth.

I asked her whether she then held the statements of the good Lord Harduin and of the innkeeper Tortehras to be true.

She admitted that they were true for the most part, but she added that some parts of them were evilly inspired, slanderous, and stupid.

Then I asked her: "Do you admit to have loved and copulated with the noblemen, burghers and the rest with whom, according to the declarations of the inhabitants you have had

she brazenly replied: "Love, yes, I have
nication."

things which my lovers desired gave me infinite pleasure because those were the things which satisfied them. We all like our own pleasure more than anything else, and want everything to be harmonious and beautiful outside as well as inside our hearts; so all the men who loved me wanted to see my house decorated with the most beautiful things. That is why they were as fond as I was of filling it with gold and silk and flowers. These lovely things did no harm, so I had no real grounds for stopping a knight or even a rich citizen who loved me doing as he liked; I was forced to become the recipient of expensive perfumes and other presents which overwhelmed and dazzled me. That is the origin of the gold dishes, carpets and jewels, which the officers of the law have seized in my house."

This brought to an end the first interrogation of the woman called Sister Clare, and suspected of being a demon, because the sound of her voice in our ears fatigued us so much that Guillaume Tournebouché and I could not concentrate, our understanding having become quite muddled.

I instructed that the second interrogation should take place three days later. We should try to prove then that the accused was possessed and inhabited by a demon. Meanwhile she was shut up again in her dungeon under the supervision of Master Guillaume Tournebouché.

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Three days later, on the 13th February, Sister Clare was again brought before me, Hiérosme Cornille, et cetera, to be questioned on the acts and deeds with which she was accused, and to be convicted.

I told the accused that, from the various replies she had made to the questions asked her in the previous interrogation, it was certain that no one woman—whatever authorisation she were given, if such exists, to lead the life of a loose woman giving pleasure to all men—could cause so many deaths, and practise sorceries with such perfect success, without the assistance of a guardian evil spirit

dwelling within her, to whom her soul had been sold by a special pact. It was quite apparent, I said, that a demon was the propagator of these misfortunes and evils; a demon who lived and moved inside her, hidden from sight, and I called upon her to tell the court how old she had been when she had first received the demon, to make known the conditions of the agreement she had made with him, and to reveal the whole truth of the evils they had perpetrated together. Her rejoinder to this was that she would reply to me, a man, as she would to God, who was the real judge of us all. She then claimed that she had never spoken to the demon, never seen him or desired to see him; that she had never traded as a high-class prostitute and never tasted the many varied delights which love inspired, save in so far as she was drawn to them by the pleasure which the Lord Creator had ordained for that thing, adding that she had always been led on more from a desire to be sweet and good to her dear beloved lord, than by any incessantly raging desire. But even if such had been her desire, she begged us to remember that she was a poor African girl, in whom God had planted very hot blood; and in her mind so ready an understanding and appreciation of the delights of love, that when a man looked at her a thrill of pleasure ran through her; and if an amorous lord, desirous of intimacy, touched any part of her with the smooth of his hand, in spite of herself, she was in his power, because her heart was at once won over and her will crushed. By this touch the memory and expectancy of all the sweet joys of love were awakened deep within her; an intense heat grew there, mounting within her flaming through her veins, sending thrills of love and joy through her from head to foot. Since the day when Don Marsilis had first awakened her understanding of these things, she had never thought of anything else. She had realised then that love was a thing so perfectly suited to her, that for lack of men and natural relief she would have withered up and died at the convent. And as evidence of this, she maintained with complete certainty that since her escape from the nunnery she had not spent a day or even a particle of time in sadness or in melancholy. Rather was she always happy.

and in this way, she said, she behaved as God had intended she should, adding that she had been diverted from the will of God during the time wasted in the convent.

Here I interjected that by this reply she had openly blasphemed against God, because, I said, we had been made to His greater glory and placed in the world to honour and serve Him; we should concentrate on His blessed commandments and live in holiness that we might inherit eternal life, and not always be in bed doing what the beasts themselves only do at fixed times.

The accused replied that she had always greatly honoured God; that she had taken care of the poor and needy in all countries, had given them large quantities of money and clothing, and had always been overcome with sadness at sight or knowledge of their miseries; and that on the last judgment day she hoped to be surrounded by a goodly array of holy works pleasant to God which would intercede for her. Had it not been for her humility, her fear of being reproached, and of displeasing the gentlemen of the Chapter, she would gladly have spent all her wealth on the completion of the cathedral of St. Maurice; for the salvation of her soul she would have built the foundations of it, sparing neither herself nor her pleasure to that end; with this aim in view, she said, she would have taken twice as much pleasure in her nights, knowing that every new affair contributed a stone to the building of the basilica. Moreover, she added, all her bedfellows would have been most ready to give generously towards the building of the cathedral as well as towards her eternal welfare.

"How can you justify your sterility?" I asked. "For in spite of so much copulation you have never had a child; which proves the presence of a demon in you. And how can you account for the fact that you speak all languages—which is also evidence for the devil in you—for only Astaroth or one of the apostles was capable of that?"

She replied that if she was accused of having a prolific knowledge of languages, all she could say was that the only words of Greek she knew were "Kyrie eleison," of which she made frequent use, and

the only word of Latin she knew was "Amen"—which she said to God, wishing to procure her liberty by it. As for the rest of the question, her barrenness had always grieved her, she said; and if housewives had children, it must be because they derived very little pleasure from the preliminaries, whilst she derived a little too much. That it should be thus was doubtless the wish of God, who prized the happiness she gave the world too highly to dare risk losing it. After hearing this and a thousand and one other reasonings which sufficiently established the presence of the devil in the body of the woman called Sister Clare, because it is a characteristic of Lucifer always to find heretical arguments which sound true and probable, I ordered that the accused should be subjected to torture, in our presence, and well tormented in order to reduce her by suffering to submission to the Church's authority. I gave orders that François de Hangest, master surgeon and doctor to the Chapter, should assist in the torturing, charging him in a writ which is appended—to examine the natural female characteristics (*virtutes vulvae*) of the accused, so as to enlighten our religion upon the methods which she used to snare men's souls, and to see if any artifice was apparent there.

Thinking of the anguish in store for her, the moorish woman began to weep bitterly, and ignoring her chains she fell on her knees and implored me with screams and cries to revoke this order, insisting that her limbs were so weak and her bones so brittle that she would break like glass. Finally she offered to buy her release from torture by giving all her possessions to the Chapter, and leaving the country for good.

Upon this I required her to declare of her own free will that she was and always had been a demon of the succubus sort—which are female demons whose mission it is to seduce and corrupt Christians by the blandishments and flagitious delights of love. She answered that such an affirmation would be an abominable lie, as she had always felt herself to be a most normal woman.

Her chains were then struck off by the torturer; and removing her dress, she deliberately and maliciously obscured, dazzled and upset

our understanding and concentration with the sight of her body, which certainly excites a man beyond words.

At this point Master Guillaume Tournebouché was compelled for natural reasons to lay down his pen and withdraw, objecting that he could not, without incredible temptations, be a witness to this torture, and that he felt the devil laying violent hold of him.

This brought the second interrogation to a close. The apparitor and janitor of the Chapter stated that Master François de Hangest was absent from the town, so the torture and interrogations were fixed for the following day, at midday after mass.

I wrote this down in the absence of Master Guillaume Tournebouché on whose behalf I signed :

Hiérosme Cornille, Grand Inquisitor.

Petition

14th February.

Jehan Ribou, Antoyne Jahan, Martin Beaupertuys, Hiérôme Maschefer, Jacques de Ville d'Omer and Lord d'Ydré appeared before me to-day; Lord d'Ydré deputised for the Mayor who was absent. At the request of Blanche Bruyn—who has now admitted to being a nun in Mount Carmel convent with the name of Sister Clare—I informed these men—who are all signatories to the petition made out in the Town Hall—of the appeal which the woman accused of witchcraft and devilry had made to the judgment of God, and of her offer to pass through the ordeal of fire and water under the eyes of the Chapter and the town of Tours, in order to prove her natural womanhood and her innocence.

All the plaintiffs agreed to this request; and stipulating the town as their security, they promised to prepare the site, and have a stake built which would be suitable and have the approval of the Godparents of the accused.

I fixed the date of the ordeal for the first day of the year, which will be next Easter, at midday, after mass. All the parties agreed that the delay was quite sufficient.

This decree will be published at their request by the crier in all the towns, villages and castles of Touraine and France they desire, at their expense and as they dispose.

Hierosme Cornille.

*How the Succubus seduced the Old Judge, and
sucked out his soul, and what came of this
diabolical delectation.*

What follows is a copy of the extreme confession made on the 1st of March, 1271 A.D., by Hiérosme Cornille, priest and canon of the Chapter of St. Maurice Cathedral, grand inquisitor, who acknowledges himself in every way unworthy. Realising his last hour come, and contrite of his sins, misdeeds, shortcomings, failings and wickednesses, he desired that his confession should be made public, to proclaim and propagate the truth, the Glory of God, and the justice of the tribunal, and to alleviate his chastisement in the next world.

Jehan de la Haye (*de Haga*), Vicar of the Church of St. Maurice, was summoned to the deathbed of Hiérosme Cornille to hear his last statement; as also were Pierre Guyard, the Chapter treasurer, appointed by his lordship Archbishop Jehan de Monsoreau to take down the judge's words, and Dom Louis Pot, monk of the Marius Monasterium (*Marmoustier*) chosen by the dying man to be his father in God and confessor. These three were assisted by the great and noble Doctor Guillaume de Censoris, Archdeacon of the Roman church, who happened to be in the diocese where he had been sent as envoy (*legatus*) by Our Holy Father the Pope. Many Christians had also come to witness the passing of Hiérosme Cornille, knowing that as he was sinking fast he intended to make a public repentance and that his words might open the eyes of Christians who were on the road to hell.

As Hiérosme was too weak to speak, Dom Louis Pot read the following confession to the great consternation of the assembled company :

"Brethren, until a few days ago I believed I had lived the seventy-nine years of my life as a Christian should, and that, apart from the little sins which make every Christian guilty before God—but for which he can atone by penitence—I had well deserved the

praise and renown which this diocese bestowed upon me, where was raised to the high position of grand inquisitor, a post of which I am unworthy. But now, awed by the realisation of the infinite glory of God, and overcome with fear for the punishments which await sinners and evil-doers in hell, I thought to alleviate the great burden of my sins by making the fullest possible confession in this my last hour. Therefore I asked permission of the Church which I have denied and betrayed, and whose authority and reputation for justice I have besmirched--to make my confession in public after the manner of the ancient Christians. I wish I could show greater repentance; if I had enough strength left in me I would stand at the cathedral door and be reviled by my colleagues, stay a whole day there on my knees, barefooted, holding a candle, with a rope round my neck--as penitence for my many strayings into the paths of hell away from the holy interests of God. May the wrecking of my frail virtue be a warning and a lesson to you to flee from sinful ways and the snares of the devil, and take refuge in the Church where all our succour lies. The devil used all his cunning to bring me to this pass; may therefore Our Saviour Jesus Christ take pity upon a poor misused Christian whose eyes are wet with tears. I call upon your aid and your prayers to intercede for me. I would I had another life to spend in works of penitence!

"Listen now to what I have to say and tremble with fear!

"I was appointed by the Chapter Assembly to set up, carry through and complete the trial instituted against a demon which had appeared in the form of a woman--a wicked nun who had fallen from God and denied His Holy Name, and who was called Zulma in her heathen country of origin. This devil is known to the diocese as Sister Clare of the Mount Carmel Nunnery; she has brought the town great sorrow by going to bed with an infinite number of men in order to win their souls over to Mammon, Astaroth and Satan, the princes of hell, sending them out of this world with the stain of mortal sin on them, snuffing out the candle of their lives where life is lit. Into this pit I too, in the autumn of my days, have fallen,

the sweet Saviour of men. Hypnotised by her, I wandered through the streets, my mind full of sinful thoughts, remembering her lovely voice and her wickedly fascinating body. Then, with the devil already well planted in my head like a hatchet in an oak tree, I was suddenly pierced and pitched forward by his fork, and the sharp point guided my steps towards the jail in spite of my guardian angel, who tugged at my sleeve every now and then and tried to defend me against temptation. But all his holy advice and assistance was of no avail; I was dragged on by a million claws dug into my heart, and soon found myself at the jail. The door was opened to me and what I saw inside looked quite unlike a prison, for there—with the aid of evil spirits and goblins—the Succubus had built herself a pavilion of ermine and silk full of perfumes and flowers. There she sat, magnificently clad, with neither irons round her neck nor chains on her feet. I let myself be undressed, and when my Church vestments had been discarded, I was given a scented bath. The demon dressed me again in a Saracen robe, regaled me with a feast of rare dainties, served up in precious bowls, with Asiatic wines in gold cups, and entertained me with marvellous songs and music, and countless little flatteries which tickled my soul with delight. The Succubus sat by my side, and the sweet detestable nearness of her distilled new ardour into my limbs. My guardian angel left me. From then onwards I lived by the terrible glow of the moor's eyes, coveting the warm embraces of her slender body, filled with unquenched longing for the feel of her red lips—which I supposed quite natural—fearless of her bitings which drag you down into the depths of hell. Her hands were the smoothest in the world, and I revelled in the pleasure they gave me, not thinking that they were really foul claws. In fact I was as fidgety as a young husband after his bride, without realising that in my case the bride was death eternal. I gave no thought to worldly matters or to God's affairs, dreaming only of love, of this woman's lovely breasts which made me burn, and of her gate of Hell which I itched to burst open. Alas! brethren, for three days and nights I laboured there, without drying up the torrent which flowed from my loins, in which the hands of

the Succubus were thrust like two pikes, imparting an unimaginable sweat of love to my poor old body and my dried up bones. The first thing the demon did to draw me to her was to engender a feeling as smooth as milk in me; sharp little thrills of happiness followed which pricked my bones, marrow, brain and nerves like a hundred needles. Then all the hidden elements in my head, blood, nerves, flesh and bones, burst into flame at this sport; I burned with real hell-fire which racked my joints, and gave me an incredible, intolerable, heartrending feeling of voluptuous pleasure which loosened my vital fibres. The demon's long hair flowed over my poor body, scattering a shower of flaming heat over me; each tress was like a red-hot iron bar. All through this mortal pleasure I could see the eager laughing face of the Succubus, who said a thousand and one things to excite me; I was her cavalier, she said, her lord; her lancer, her day, her joy, her passion, her life, her good—her best rider. She said she intended to unite herself even closer to me, desiring to be in my skin, or to have me in hers. When I heard this, I was goaded on by her tongue which sucked out my soul; I plunged and hurled myself forward into hell and found it fathomless. Then when there was not a drop of blood left in my veins, when my heart had stopped beating, and I felt a completely ruined man, the demon, still fresh and white and pink, shining and laughing, said: "You poor fool, to think I was a demon! If I asked you to sell me your soul for a kiss, wouldn't you jump at the offer?" "Yes," I said. "And if to go on like this for ever you had to nourish yourself with the blood of new-born children to have always fresh life to spend in my bed, wouldn't you suck their blood most willingly?" "Yes," I said. "Wouldn't you deny God and spit in the face of Jesus to remain my gallant horseman, gay like a man in the prime of his life, full of life and energy, drinking in pleasure, diving into the very depths of joy like a swimmer into the Loire?" "Yes, yes!" I said. "If you were due for another twenty years of monastic life, wouldn't you throw them over for two years of this love which burns you, and for the pleasure of this lovely motion?" "Yes, yes, yes," I cried.

Then I felt a hundred sharp claws, which tore into my diaphragm like the beaks of a thousand screaming carrion crows. The Succubus spread her wings and lifted me up on her above the earth, shouting: "Ride, horseman, ride! Hold tight to your mare's crupper, to her mane, to her neck, and ride, ride, my gallant rider! Everything rides!" Sailing above the world I saw, like a blanket of fog, all the cities of the earth, each one coupled with a female demon, tossing about, engendering in mighty concupiscence, shouting innumerable words of love and exclamations of all sorts, and toiling together in ecstacy. Still galloping her winged way through the clouds, my moorhen-headed mount showed me the earth in consummation with the sun and the spawn of stars which flowed from it. Every female world lay with a male world. Their language of love was not like human speech; their groans and sighs were our storms, and their cries of joy were lightning flashes and thunderclaps. Climbing still higher I saw above these worlds the female nature of all things in close love embrace with the prince of movement. Then, to mock me, the Succubus planted me in the middle of this horrifying battleground of perpetual peristaltic motion where I was swallowed up, like a grain of sand in the sea. And still my white mare cried, "Ride, ride, my pretty rider, ride! Everything rides!" I realised then what a little thing a priest was in this torrent of world spawnings, where metals, stones, oceans, atmospheres, thunderclaps, fishes, plants, animals, man, spirits, worlds and planets embraced and rode together, and I denied the Catholic faith. The Succubus pointed to the Milky Way and said: "That constellation is a drop of heavenly seed which escaped from a mighty flow of worlds in copulation." Just then my passion overtook me and I rode wildly by the light of a thousand million stars, wishing I could feel the nature of them all. This last effort sent me spinning to earth, I fell impotent and crushed, and as I fell I heard a great belly laugh from hell. The next thing I knew I was in my bed with my servants all around me. They had the courage to fight against the Succubus by throwing a whole bucketful of holy water into the bed I had lain in, and by praying

fervently to God. In spite of their aid, I had to wage a most horrible battle with the Succubus, whose claws still stuck in my heart, and caused me the most terrible pains. When, encouraged by my servants, relations and friends, I tried to make the holy sign of the Cross again, she perched herself on my bed, at the head, at the foot, everywhere, and did her best to distract me, laughed, ogled, put a thousand obscene images before my eyes, and filled me with countless evil desires. But his lordship the Archbishop took pity on me, and had the relics of St. Gatien brought, and as soon as the shrine had touched the bed the Succubus was forced to flee, leaving behind her an odour of sulphur and hell which troubled my servants, friends and others for a whole day. Then my soul was lit again by God's holy light and I knew that because of my sins and my fight with the evil spirit I was in grave danger of dying. I begged for special grace to live just a little longer to glory God and His Church, preaching of the endless praises we owe to Jesus who died on the Cross to save Christians. My prayer was answered; I was allowed to recover sufficient strength to confess my sins, and to ask the aid and assistance of all the members of the Church of St. Maurice to deliver me from purgatory where I go to atone for my faults by great and lasting sorrow. Finally, I declare that the proclamation, in which I made known the demon's appeal to the judgment of God and her offer to undergo the ordeals of holy water and of fire, is a piece of demon subterfuge; it was her evil mind which suggested it and if her wish had been satisfied she would have eluded the justice of the tribunal of the Archbishop and Chapter. I say this because she told me secretly that she was able to substitute another demon in her place who was quite accustomed to these ordeals. Last of all, I give and bequeath all my worldly goods to the Chapter to found a chapel in the church of St. Maurice, to build it and decorate it, and dedicate it to St. Hiérosme and St. Gatien, one of whom is my patron saint and the other the saviour of my soul."

This confession, heard by all the company present, has been brought to the notice of the ecclesiastical tribunal by Jehan de la Haye (Johan

How the Mooress of the Rue Chaulde tried to elude her captors with such dexterity that it was only with great difficulty, and in spite of all the machinations of hell, that she was burnt and roasted alive.

This was written in the month of May in the year 1360, in the form of a last testament.

"My dearly beloved son, when it is lawful for you to read this, I, your father, shall be laid in my grave imploring your prayers and humbly supplicating you to comport yourself in life as you will be bidden in this letter, which I bequeath to you for the wise ordering of your family, your future happiness and your security; for I write this at a time when my mind and my reason are still troubled by a recent act of great human injustice. When I was a young man, I had the great ambition to rise in the Church, and to win the highest positions of dignity for myself, because I thought no other life was so fine or beautiful. With this serious intention I earned to read and to write; and eventually, after much trouble, I had educated myself enough for ordination. But for lack of protection and wise counsels for my training, I resorted to other methods; I entered my name for the post of clerk, scrivener and rubrican of the Chapter of St. Maurice, whose members were the richest and most powerful men in Christendom—since the King is only entered as a mere canon there. There, I said to myself, I should find better opportunities than anywhere else for rendering services to knights and lords, who would then become my masters and patrons, and use their influence to get me into the Church where I would rise to be a bishop like anyone else, and be called to an archbishopric somewhere or other. But this first vision of mine turned out to be a mirage and God showed me by subsequent events that I had been a little too ambitious. This post was in fact given to M. Jehan de Villedomer, who later became a cardinal; I

was rejected, and discountenanced. My disappointment was ke but my unhappiness at this period of my life was alleviated by the good offices of that worthy old man Hiérosme Cornille, the cathedral inquisitor, of whom I have often spoken to you. He, de man, persuaded me most kindly to become clerk to the Chapter St. Maurice and Archbishopric of Tours, where I acquitted myself with honour, for I had the reputation of being a fine scrivener. the year I was due to go up to be ordained, there began the famous trial of the devil of the Rue Chaulde. Old men still talk about and tell their children the old story, which at one time or another must have been heard in every home in France. My good master appointed me to write down everything worth noting in this great matter, feeling that it would serve my ambition and that the Chapter might reward my services with some new position of responsibility. At the outset, Monseigneur Hiérosme Cornille, a man nearly eighty years old, of great sense and judgment and sound understanding, suspected that spiteful and vicious people had had a hand in bringing the Succubus to trial. He had no liking for loose women, and had never involved himself with any woman in his life, which had always been most saintly and respectable, a fact which had led him to be elected a judge; nevertheless it was perfectly clear to him, as soon as the witnesses' statements had been given and the poor girl's evidence heard, that though she had broken the rules of her convent, she was quite innocent of witchcraft, and that her enemies—and others whom I will prudently omit to mention by name—had designs on her great wealth. Everyone believed at the time that she had enough gold and silver to buy the county of Touraine if she chose to. Respectable women were very jealous of her, and the innumerable lying and slanderous rumours which circulated were believed like the gospel.

At this juncture, Hiérosme Cornille, realising that the only demon in her was love, made her consent to spend the rest of her days in a convent. Then, informed by certain brave knights, proved in battle and rich in land, that they would do their utmost to rescue her, he invited her in secret to demand from her accusers the judg-

ment of God, and to give all her possessions to the Chapter in order to silence mischievous tongues. In this way the sweetest flower which ever grew on earth might have been saved from the stake; a flower whose only failings were that she was far too kind and pandered too much to those whom her eyes had made sick with love for her. But the real devil, in the form of a monk, now began to meddle in the affair; and this is how. A great enemy of my master's virtue, experience and holiness, a man called Jehan de la Haye, learnt that the poor girl was treated like a queen in her cell, and accused Cornille of having connived with her and of being in her service. This wicked priest tried to prove this by saying that she made my master young, amorous and happy. This was too much for the poor old man, who died of grief in twenty-four hours, realising before his end that Jehan de la Haye had worked to bring about his downfall because he coveted his position and responsibilities. His lordship the Archbishop did in fact pay a visit to the jail; he found the moorress comfortably installed. It appears that she had concealed a diamond in the most unlikely place and had bought the jailer's favour with it. Some people said at the time that the jailer was infatuated with her, and was planning her escape, because he loved her, or more probably because he was afraid of the young noblemen who loved her.

Faced with the prospect of Cornille's death and pestered by Jehan de la Haye, the Chapter decided that it was necessary to annul all the legal proceedings which the inquisitor had conducted. De la Haye, who was then only a mere curate of the cathedral, convinced them that a public confession from the old man on his death bed would be sufficient basis for the annulment. So the dying man was tortured and tormented by the members of the Chapter, by the ecclesiastical representatives of St. Martin and Marmoustiers, by the archbishop and by the papal legate, who tried to make him recant in the Church's favour; but the old man was adamant and had no wish to do so. However, after terrible suffering, his public confession was prepared, and all the important people in the town were present to hear him make it. I cannot describe the horror and con-

her possessions, et cetera. Her sentence was the cause of great disturbances and armed clashes in the town, because three young knights of Touraine swore to die in the poor girl's service and to rescue her by hook or by crook. They rode into the town accompanied by a multitude of sufferers, labourers, old soldiers, warriors, craftsmen and the like whom the Succubus had succoured and saved from misfortune, hunger and misery. The knights then scoured the slums of the town in search of all those she had benefited, and they were summoned together and formed up on the plateau of Mont Louis, guarded by the knights' men-at-arms. They were joined by all the scoundrels from twenty leagues round, and came one morning to lay siege to the prison of the Archbishop, shouting for the moorress to be handed over to them as though they meant to put her to death, when in fact their intention was to rescue her and put her secretly on a swift horse so that she might reach open country, for it was known that she rode like a groom. The storm of men between the battlements of the Archbishop's Palace and the river bridges was terrible to behold; more than ten thousand men could be seen swarming there, besides all those who had perched themselves on the rooftops or climbed to every storey to have a view of the riot. The shouts of the Christians who joined in with the most earnest intentions, and the yells of those who were investing the jail with the intention of rescuing the poor girl could be heard on the other side of the Loire beyond St. Symphorien.

The great crowd, thirsting for the blood of the poor girl at whose feet it would have fallen if it had had the opportunity of seeing her, was so tightly wedged in a suffocating mass, that seven children, eleven women and eight men were crushed and stamped under foot into unrecognisable lumps of mud. The jaws of this huge human Leviathan—like a horrible monster—were so wide open that its shouts could be heard in Montilz-les-Tours. Everyone yelled: "Death to the Succubus!"—"Give us the demon!"—"A foot for me!"—"Her hair for me!"—"Heigh, I want a slice!"—"I want her skin!"—"I'll have the head!"—"The thing for me!"—"Is it red?"—"Shall we see it?"—"Will it be roasted?"—"To the stake

with her." "Death! Death!" Everyone had his say. But the shout of "Largesse to God, Death to the Succubus" was roared so loudly by the crowd it made the heart weep and the ears ashamed; it drowned the other cries which were almost inaudible inside the houses. To appease the storm which threatened to overthrow all authority, the Archbishop had the presence of mind and imagination to come out of the church in full ceremonial dress bearing the Cross before him; which saved the Church from ruin and destruction—for the knights and miscreants had sworn to burn and destroy the church buildings and to kill the priests and canons.

This stratagem forced the crowd to disperse, and for want of provisions they all went home again. The monks of Touraine, and the lords and burghers, terrified that there would be looting next day, took council by night and decided to accept the opinion of the Chapter. They organised great numbers of men-at-arms, bowmen, knights and citizens into a guard, which kept watch and killed a party of shepherds, bandits, and vagrants, who had got wind of the disturbances in Tours, and had come to swell the ranks of the rioters. That old nobleman, Lord Harduin de Maille, harangued the young knights who were the moorers' champions, and argued wisely with them. Did they seriously intend putting Touraine to fire and sword for the sake of such a little slip of a woman? Even if they emerged victorious, they would have the responsibility of all the bad characters whom they had recruited to their service; when these outlaws had sacked and pillaged the castles of the knights' enemies, they would turn round and destroy their masters; the rebellion they had started had had no initial success—since the prison was still intact—so how did they think they could have any success now against the Church of Tours, which would call upon d? And a thousand and one other arguments to the o which the young knights replied that it was easy for to let their prisoner escape under cover of darkness, remove the whole cause of the riot. To this reasonable suggestion, Monseigneur de Censoris, the papal legate, the strong line adopted by religion and the Church

again. The account of her flight in the church encouraged the belief amongst the common people that she was the devil, and some said she had flown through the air. When the executioner of the town threw her into the flames, she made two or three horrible leaps into the air, and then fell back into the fire which burnt for a night and a day. The following evening I went to see if there was anything left of this gentle girl, who was so sweet and loving; all I found was a pathetic fragment of her pelvis bone, which in spite of the huge fire was still a little moist and which some people said still trembled as women do there.

I cannot describe to you, dear son, the infinite and unparalleled sadness which weighed upon me for about ten years. The memory of this angel crushed by evil men haunted me; her eyes when I saw her were always full of love. In fact the supernatural qualities of this artless child shone day and night before my eyes, and I used to pray for her in the church where they had martyred her. I had neither the strength of will nor the courage to look at the grand inquisitor, Jehan de la Haye, without trembling with rage. He died eaten up by lice. Leprosy was the reward of the mayor. The inquisitor's house and wife were destroyed by fire, and all who had had a hand in the burning of the moorress suffered later for their crimes. Countless thoughts were inspired in me by these events. I have written them down here to serve as rules of conduct for our family always.

I left the service of the Church and married your mother. I received infinite blessings from her, and shared with her my life, my goods, my soul, my all. She fully agreed with me about the following precepts: firstly, if you want to live a happy life, you must keep far away from Church people; pay them the greatest respect, but never allow them to cross your threshold. This applies to all those, rich or poor, nobly or not, are considered our superiors. Secondly, stay in your present station, and stay in it without ever wishing to appear prosperous in any way. Take care not to excite envy and never cause injury to anyone; you must be strong, like the oak which crushes the plants at its feet, to break jealous necks. Even



Despair in Love

At the time when Charles the Eighth took a fancy to have the Castle of Amboise decorated, he brought with him a number of Italians to do the work---master sculptors, good painters, stone masons and architects, who produced some fine works of art which have since suffered much from neglect.

Well, the Court was then staying in that pleasant place, and, as everyone knows, the young King took great interest and pleasure in watching his people at their work. Among the foreigners there was one gentleman from Florence called Master Angelo Cappara, who was very clever at his work, and did engravings and sculptures which, in spite of his youth, were quite unsurpassed. Many people were astonished that one so young should show such skill, and indeed he had only just got the first hairs upon his chin to show that he had reached man's estate. The ladies of the Court were all fascinated by this Angelo, for he was a most handsome fellow, and sad-looking, like a dove left all alone in its nest by the death of its mate.

This was the reason for his sad looks. He had the great misfortune to be poor, and there is nothing that hampers one's activities more than this. He lived frugally and ate little, ashamed of his poverty, and in despair devoted himself to his art in an effort to earn enough to be able to live a life of leisure, which is the aim and object of all busy people. Out of bravado he used to come to Court very well-dressed, and because he was very young and timid, he was afraid to ask the King for his wages, and the King, seeing how he was dressed, imagined that he had plenty of money. All the courtiers and the ladies of the Court used to admire his work, and himself too for that matter, but not a penny did he get. Everybody, and especially the ladies, considered that he had been well

provided for by nature, and that he was rich enough in being young and handsome and having long black hair and bright eyes, and never realised that he needed money as well. In a way they were perfectly right, for there were quite a number of young gallants at Court who had managed to acquire money, lands, and everything they wanted by virtue of their youth and beauty.

In spite of his apparent extreme youth, Master Angelo was twenty years old, and no fool either. He had a generous heart and a head full of poetry and imaginings. But he had no self-confidence, and, like all unfortunate and poor people, he was dazzled by the success of others more ignorant than himself. He thought that there must be something wrong with him, either in mind or body, and did not confide his thoughts to anybody. No, I am wrong, because in the long nightwatches he did confide them to the darkness, to God, the Devil, anybody. He heartily wished that he had a less passionate nature, so that the ladies would not avoid him as they would a red hot iron. Then he told himself how he would devote himself to a lovely mistress, if only he had one; how he would honour her, how faithfully he would serve her and surround her with his love; how he would study her wishes, and how he would amuse her and chase away her little fits of melancholy when she felt sad. He conjured up a complete picture of a woman in his mind, and in imagination he flung himself at her feet, kissed, fondled, caressed and embraced her with as much sincerity as a prisoner runs across the green fields which he can see through the bars of his cage. Then he would speak persuasively to her to soften her heart, and overcome by his feelings he would clasp her tightly to him and become more daring in spite of his respect for her. He would bite his bedclothes in a frenzy of passion for this imaginary lady, as bold as you like when he was by himself, but as timid as before the next day, if he passed a real woman in the street. But still burning with his amorous desires he worked hard at his stone figures, and carved lovely breasts enough to make one's mouth water just to look at these fruits of love—not to mention the other things that he shaped and fashioned and caressed with his chisel, smoothed down with his file and moulded in

a way which could have left no doubt about their purpose in the mind of the most callow youth, and would have undermined his innocence on the spot. The ladies imagined that they recognised their own likenesses in these sculptures, and they all began to take a great interest in Master Cappara. And Master Cappara eyed them, and swore to himself that on the day that one of them gave him but one finger to kiss, he would possess her entirely.

Among these ladies of high birth, there was one who came one day to ask the young Florentine why he was so shy, and to see why none of the ladies of the Court had been able to win him over. She ended up by graciously inviting him to come and see her at her house that evening.

Master Angelo set about perfuming himself, bought a fringed velvet cloak lined with satin, and borrowed a mantle with wide sleeves from a friend, and also a slashed doublet and silken hose. Round he went to the house and hurried up the stairs, panting with hope, and trying to control his heart which would bound and flutter, do what he would—in fact, he was already head over heels in love and sweating all down his back with excitement.

The lady, of course, was beautiful, and Master Cappara appreciated this all the more, because in his profession he had made a study of such things as the turn of an arm, the lines of the body, the hidden curves of the buttocks, and other mysteries. This lady conformed very nicely to the accepted canons of art, besides being fair and slim, and possessed of a voice which would have awoken the dead and set the heart and brain and everything else on fire. In other words, the sight of her conjured up delicious pictures of love, though she herself seemed not to give it a thought, which is the nature of these accursed females.

The sculptor found her sitting by the fire in a high-backed chair, and she prattled away quite at her ease, while Master Angelo could bring out nothing but "Yes" and "No," could find nothing else to say and no other idea in his head. He would have felt like dashing his head against the mantelpiece if he had not been so happy

to watch and listen to his lovely mistress, who gambolled there like a fly in a ray of sunshine.

The two of them stayed there until midnight, silently admiring each other and venturing bit by bit along the flowery paths of love, and the young sculptor finally went away radiant with happiness. As he found his way home, he came to the conclusion that when a noble lady kept him near her for four whole hours until far into the night, it meant that it would not take much to make her keep him there until morning. Drawing from this various delightful logical conclusions, he made up his mind to ask her for you can guess what, just like any other woman. He was determined, if necessary, to kill the husband, the woman and himself too, if he did not succeed in enjoying an hour's pleasure with her. He was so serious in his love that he held his life cheap, when one day of it spent in making love was worth a thousand lives.

The Florentine thought about the evening in front of him, while he was doing his carving, and so spoilt a great many noses in thinking about other things. He realised that he would not do any good at his work, so he gave it up, and perfumed himself ready to go and listen to the charming words of his lady, which he had high hopes of turning into actions. But when he was in the presence of his love, her womanly majesty overawed him, and poor Cappara, who had felt so bold out in the street, became quite sheepish when confronted by his victim.

All the same when they reached that time of night when desire becomes warm, he had sidled right up close to the lady and was progressing very well. He had bargained for a kiss and had taken it at the right moment, for when a lady gives her kisses, she retains the right to refuse them, but when she allows them to be stolen from her, the lover may reap hundreds. That is why they all allow them to be stolen. The Florentine had managed to steal a good number, and things were going along very nicely, when suddenly the lady, who until then had been rather sparing with her favours, cried out: "Here's my husband!"

And, in fact, in came my lord, just returned home after a game of tennis, and the sculptor had to take his leave, but not before he had seen a most expressive look in the eyes of the lady interrupted in her pleasure. This was the full extent of his meagre allowance of enjoyment for a whole month, because every time he was about to taste his happiness, the husband would arrive, and every time it was just between a point-blank refusal and one of those slackenings of resolution with which women leaven their refusals—little titillations that revive love and make it all the stronger. And so the impatient sculptor used to embark on the battle of the skirt as soon as he arrived, so as to try to gain his victory before the husband (who probably found these disturbances to his advantage), and the lady, reading his purpose in his eyes, used to fob him off by inventing endless quarrels with him. First of all she would pretend to be jealous, so as to be able to rail against love; then she would quench the young man's anger by a good kiss; and she would talk and not let him get a word in—how he as her lover ought to behave, how he ought to study her wishes, otherwise she would never be able to surrender her life and her soul to him, how he ought to think nothing of doing whatever his mistress wished, and how she was braver than he, because loving more she was sacrificing more. But at the same time she did not forget to let out a dignified "Leave that alone!" at the critical moment, and she would look displeased and answer Cappara's reproaches by saying: "If you don't do as I say, I shan't love you any more."

In the end, and rather late in the day, the poor Italian began to realise that this was not a noble love, but one of those that measure out joy as a miser counts his coins. He saw that the lady enjoyed making him leap about and letting him have his way, so long as he did not try to go too far. Cappara was maddened by this treatment, and he arranged with some friends of his that they should waylay the husband, as he made his way home after his game of tennis with the King. Meanwhile he himself came to see his lady at the usual time. When their delightful love-making was well

under way—with kisses fully savoured, hair dishevelled, hands and ears passionately bitten, the whole business, in fact, except for that one thing that good authors rightly consider disgraceful—the Florentine murmured between two kisses that were more daring than the rest: "Sweetheart, do you love me more than anything in the world?" "Oh, yes," she said—for words cost nothing. "Well then," said the lover, "be really mine." "But my husband will be coming." "Is that all that worries you?" "Yes." "I have arranged with some friends to stop him and not let him pass until they see a light at this window. And if he complains to the King, my friends will say that they thought they were playing a joke on one of their own set." "Ah, my love," she said, "let me just see if everyone in the house has gone to bed."

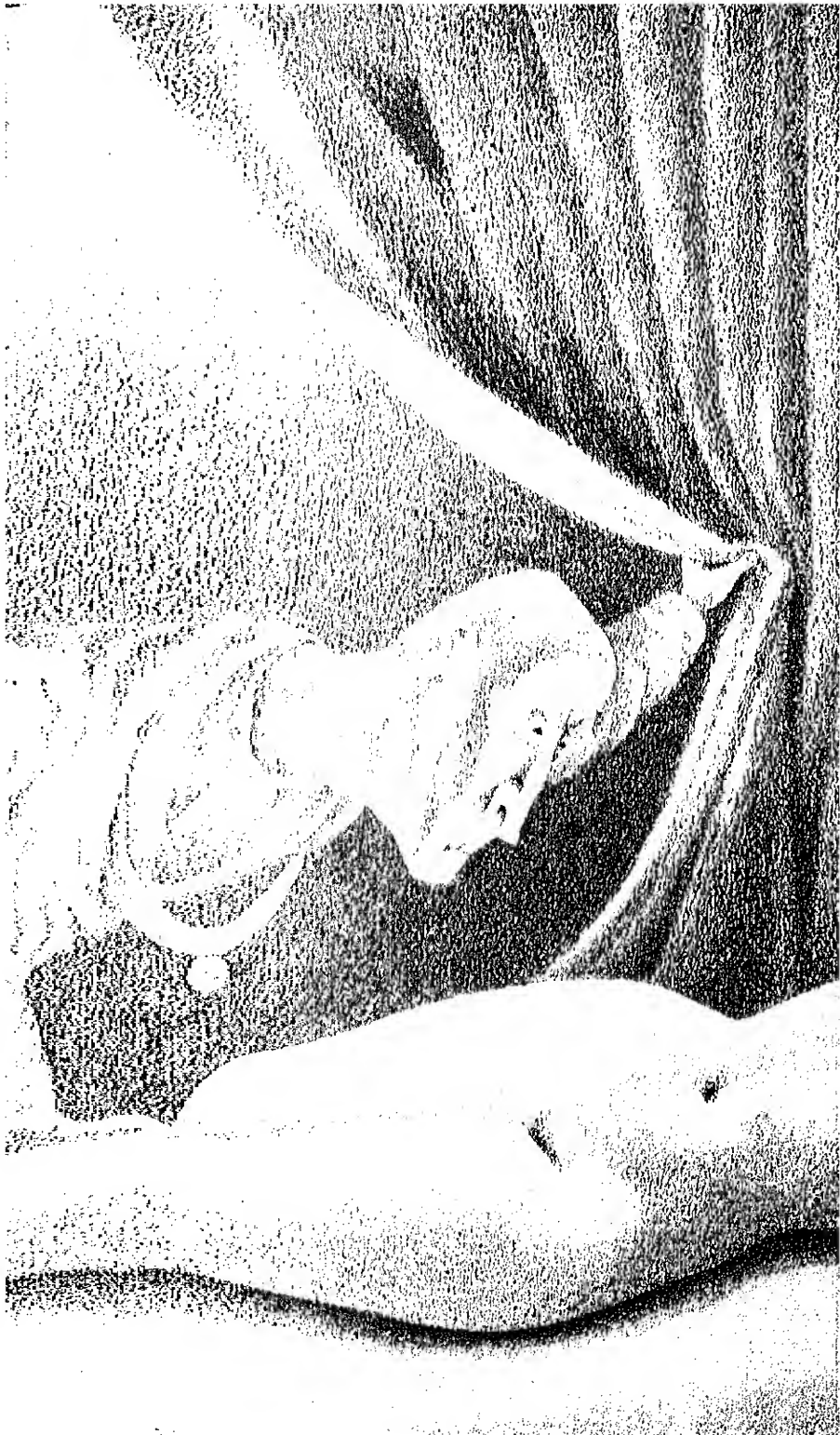
She got up and showed the light at the window. When he saw this, Master Cappara blew out the candle, took up his sword and stood over this woman whom he at last saw in her true colours. "I shall not kill you, madam," he said, "but I shall spoil your face so that you will not be able to flirt with any more young men and play with their lives, as you have with mine. You have deceived me most shamefully, and you are a worthless woman. You shall discover that a kiss is not enough for any man of spirit, and that a kiss on the mouth must be followed by all the rest. You have made my life unbearable and miserable to me, and so I shall leave you something that will never let you forget my death, which you have caused. You will not be able to look in your mirror without seeing my face there too."

Then he raised his arm, and held his sword ready to cut off a slice of her lovely fresh cheek, where traces of his kisses still remained. Then the lady reproached him. "Hold your tongue!" he said. "You told me that you loved me more than anything in the world. Now you say differently. Every evening you raised me a little higher into heaven, then with one blow you cast me down into hell—and you expect your petticoat to save you now from a lover's fury? Well, it will not." "Ah, my Angelo, let me be yours!" she

cried, overcome by his face transfigured with rage. But he drew back and said: "Ah, you wicked false woman! So you love your face more than your lover!"

She turned pale, and humbly presented her face for the blow, for she realised that her present love would not make up for her past wickedness. Angelo slashed her face with one blow, walked out of the house, and left the country then and there. The husband, who had not been waylaid because the Florentines had seen the light at the window, came home to find his wife without her left cheek, but she would not say a word, in spite of the pain, because at the last moment she had fallen in love with Cappara. But still the husband wanted to know how she got the wound. And as no one but the Florentine had come to the house, he complained to the King, who ordered his workman to be pursued and hung at Blois. On the day fixed for the hanging, a lady of noble birth decided to try to save this man of spirit, who she thought must be a lover of great merit. She begged the King to let her have her wish, to which he readily agreed. But Cappara declared that he would remain true to his lady, whose memory he could not efface from his mind, and he entered the Church, became a cardinal and a great scholar, and used to say in his old age that he had been kept alive by the memory of the joys he had experienced in those miserable days when he had been at the same time so badly and so well treated by his lady. There are some who say that afterwards he succeeded better with his old sweetheart, whose cheek healed in the course of time, but I do not believe it, for he was a man of spirit who had a high conception of the holy joys of love.

This teaches us nothing of note, unless it is that there are bad things to be met with in life, since this is a true story. If by chance the Author has gone beyond the bounds of truth in other stories, this one will make up for it.



*Concerning a Provost
who did not recognise things*

It was in the good town of Bourges, at the time when our lord King used to go there to amuse himself,—(he later gave up the pursuit of pleasure to make his conquest of the kingdom, which he duly achieved),—and there was living there a provost who was entrusted by the King with the maintenance of law and order; and he was known as the King's Provost. From this office, under the King's glorious son, came that of Provost of the Household, in which my lord Tristan of Méré was to behave with rather too much zeal—he has already been mentioned in these Tales, although there was certainly nothing jolly about him. I give this information to the friends who pilfer from old books to manufacture new ones, and to show how learned these stories really are, without appearing to be so. Well, anyway, this same Provost bore the name of Picot or Picault, out of which the French made *picottin* a "peck," *picoter* "to peck," and *picorée* "pilfering"; and some called him Pitot or Pitault, from which *pitance* is derived; in the South of France they called him Pichot, from which nothing of importance has come; Patriot or Petiet in the tongue of Northern France, and Petitot and Petinault or Petiniaud, which was his name in the Limousin. But in Bourges they called him *Petit*—"Petty," the name that was eventually adopted by the family, which has multiplied a great deal, for you will find *Petits* everywhere; and "Petty" we shall call him in this story. I have told you this etymology so that some light may be shed upon our language, and so that you may learn how the *bourgeois*—the men of Bourges—and others, came to acquire their names. But that's enough of learning.

This Provost, who went by as many names as the Court went through provinces, was in reality a little bit of a man, whose mother had given him such a peculiar skin that whenever he tried to laugh, he had to stretch his cheeks like a cow screwing herself up to make

water; and at the Court a "Provost's smile" was so-called after his. But one day the King, hearing some courtiers using this byword, said to them jokingly: "You are wrong, Gentlemen; Petty doesn't laugh,—the skin round his mouth is too tight."

But with his false laugh this Petty was all the more suited to his job of keeping order and nabbing law-breakers. On the whole he was worth the labour he had cost. If there was any malice in him, it was that he was a bit of a cuckold; if he had a vice, it was going to evensong; his only wisdom was in obeying God, whenever he could; his only joy was a wife at home; all he ever did for a change was to look for a man to hang, whenever he was asked to provide one, and he never failed to find one; but when he was asleep beneath his counterpane he never gave a thought to thieves and robbers. You couldn't find a more harmless provost in all Christendom. All provosts hang either too much or too little, whereas this one hanged just often enough to keep his title of Provost.

Our good justicing Petty, or Petty the justicer, was the possessor of one of the most beautiful women in Bourges, and this by lawful marriage, which amazed him as much as it did everybody else. Often, on his way to his hangings, he would ask God the same question as people in the town asked:—why was it that he, Petty, the Sheriff, the Provost Royal should have to himself a female so finely fashioned, so perfectly adorned with charms, that an ass would bray with pleasure to see her pass? To this God would make no reply, and there is no doubt whatever that He had His reasons. But the scandal-mongers of the town would answer for God, and say that she was nowhere near being a virgin when she married Petty. Some said that she did not reserve her favours for him alone. The wags replied that asses often got into fine stables. Everyone had taunts ready, which would have made a nice little collection if anyone had gathered them together. But nearly four quarters of all this must be discounted, for Mistress Petty was a sensible woman, who had but one lover for pleasure, and her husband for duty. You won't find many in the town as careful of their hearts and mouths as she was. If you can bring me even one, I shall give you a guinea, or a

cocquedouille that he would have the lover's blood, whoever he might be. But he swore nothing about the lady,—which betokens a true Frenchman, for in cases like this, the affronted party often wants to ruin everything and everybody, and kill four people out of every three. The Constable wagered his great black *cocquedouille* before the King and my lady of Sorel, who were playing cards before suppertime; and his good Majesty was pleased, because he would have been glad to be rid of the lord, whom he greatly disliked, and this without its costing him so much as a thank you.

"But how will you manage it?" asked my lady of Sorel with a smile. "Ho! ho!" replied the Constable, "rest assured, my lady that I have no wish to lose my great black *cocquedouille*."

What was this great *cocquedouille* that he spoke of? Aha! it is a point obscure enough to make you ruin your eyes looking it up in ancient books; but it was certainly something of considerable importance. At any rate, let us put on our spectacles and search. In Brittany *douille* means a girl, and *cocque* signifies the pan used by the cook, *coquus* in the jargon of latin times. Out of this word has come *coquin* in French, a rascal who gobbles, tipples, trusses, fries, gushes, lushes, roasts, toasts, fusses over everything and eats the lot; who can do nothing between his meals, and therefore goes to the bad, and is reduced to poverty, which leads him to beg and steal. From this scholars must conclude that the great *cocquedouille* was a household utensil in the form of a *cocquemard*, or "big-bellied pot," suitable for frying a maid.

"Well," continued the Constable, who was lord of Richmond, "I shall have the husband sent out into the country in the King's service for a day and a night, to arrest some peasants who are suspected of plotting treachery with the English. Then my two pigeons, knowing their man away, will be as joyful as soldiers off duty; and if they allow themselves any junketing, I shall unleash my Provost, and send him in the King's name to search the house where the couple will be, so that at the right moment he can catch and kill our friend, who is trying to keep this good friar all to himself." "What does this mean?" said the lady Beautiful. "He's

joking," said the King, smiling. "Come and have supper," said Mistress Agnes. "It is very naughty of you to talk so disrespectfully of the good women of the town and the friars too."

Now it happened that for a long time past good Mistress Petty had been wanting to take her pleasure a whole night long, and caper about at her lord's house, where you could shout at the top of your voice without waking the neighbours; for at the Provost's house she was afraid of making too much noise, and enjoyed no more than the peckings of love, fragments picked up in cramped corners, mere mouthfuls, and she dared not go faster than an ambling-pace, when she wanted to learn to gallop as fast as her legs could carry her. So at about midday on the following day, her waiting-maid trotted off to the lord's mansion, to let him know that the good Provost had gone away; and she told the noble lover, who usually paid her well, and whom she therefore did not in the least dislike, to make his preparations for pleasure, and for supper, since the Provost's better half would certainly be round at his house in the evening both hungry and thirsty. "Good!" said the lord, "tell your mistress that I shall not let her fast in any way."

The pages of the villainous Constable, who were on the watch round the house, seeing the lover putting all in trim, and taking in stores of food and wine, came back to tell their master how everything was going according to plan. When he heard this, the good Constable rubbed his hands, as he thought of the blow the Provost would strike. So then he promptly ordered him, by the King's express command, to return to town, to seize at the said lord's house an English lord with whom he was strongly suspected of concocting some dark and desperate plot. But before carrying out the order he was to receive instructions about the way in which it was to be done. The Provost, who was as happy as a king to speak with the King, so hastened that he was in the town at the very hour when the two lovers were ringing the first chimes of their vespers. The lord of Cuckoldom and the surrounding countries, who is a spirited fellow, had arranged everything so well that Mistress Petty was speaking in most excellent style with her beloved lord, just at the

"Yes, certainly," said the Provost. "But I am an old bird, and not easily caught. I must be sure that it is really a lady of the Court and not an Englishman, because these Englishmen have flesh as white and smooth as a woman's. I ought to know, because I've hanged so many of them."

"Well," said the lord, "considering what crime I am wickedly accused of, of which I must clear myself, I am going to beg my lady-love to forget her modesty for a moment; she is too fond of me to refuse to save me from any reproach. So I shall therefore ask her to turn over, and show you a physiognomy which will not compromise her at all, and which will suffice for you to recognise a noblewoman, even upside down." "Very well," said the Provost.

The lady, who had been listening with all her ears, had folded her clothes and put them under the pillow, taken off her shift, so that her husband should not feel its texture, wound a scarf round her head, and exposed to view her rounded buttocks separated by the very pretty line of her rose-coloured backbone. "Come in, my good friend," said the lord.

The Provost looked up the chimney, opened the cupboard and the clothes-chest, rummaged under the bed, in the sheets, and everywhere. Then he began to examine what was on the bed. "My lord," he said, casting an eye upon his own lawful property, "I have seen young Englishmen with backs like that. You must forgive my doing my duty, but I must see otherwise." "In what other way do you mean?" asked the lord. "Well, the other physiognomy, or, if you prefer it, the other's physiognomy."

"Then you must allow my lady to cover and arrange herself so as to show as little as possible of what is our delight," said the lord; knowing that his mistress had several freckles which could easily be recognised. "So turn away for a moment and let my lady do as common decency demands."

The woman smiled at her lover, kissed him for his cleverness, and draped herself carefully; and the husband, as he got a good view of what his wife would never let him see, was wholly convinced that

no English person could be fashioned like that, without being a charming Englishwoman.

"Yes, my lord," he said in his deputy's ear, "it certainly is a lady of the Court, for our townswomen are not so finely developed, nor so charming."

Then, when the house had been ransacked, and no Englishman had been found, the good Provost returned, as the Constable had directed him, to the King's apartments. "Have you killed him?" asked the Constable. "Who?" "Why the man that was planting horns on your forehead." "I only saw a woman in my lord's bed, and he was busy enjoying himself with her." "You saw this woman with your own eyes, you wretched cuckold, and you did not kill your rival!" "It was not a woman, but a lady of the Court." "Did you see her?" "Yes, and verified her both ways." "What do you mean by that?" said the King, bursting out laughing. "I say, saving your Majesty's presence, that I inspected her above and below." "Then you do not know your wife's physiognomy, you mindless old fool? You deserve to be hanged!" "Where my wife is concerned I have too much reverence for this thing that you speak of to look upon it. Besides, she is of so religious a cast that she would die rather than show the smallest part of it." "True," said the King, "it was not made to be shown." "You old *cocquedouille*, that was your wife!" said the Constable. "My lord Constable, she is asleep, poor thing." "Quick, quick, then! Our horses! Let us be off; and if she is at your house, I'll not give you more than a hundred lashes with my whip."

And the Constable, followed by the Provost, reached the latter's house in less time than it would take a beggar to empty a poor-box. "Hi! Hullo there!" At this, when the maid heard the noise the men were making, threatening to break down the walls, she opened the door, yawning and stretching her arms. The Constable and the Provost rushed into the room, where they had great difficulty in waking the lady, who pretended to be frightened, and was so soundly asleep that her eyes were all gummed up. Then the Provost was

triumphantly, and told the Constable that he must certainly have been mistaken, for his wife was a virtuous woman; and indeed she looked the very image of astonishment. The Constable cleared his throat. The good Provost started to undress straightaway, for the whole adventure had reminded him of his wife. While he was stripping off his accoutrements, and slipping off his breeches, the lady, astonished, said to him :

"My darling, what is all this noise about,—my lord Constable, and his pages? Why did they come to see if I was asleep? Is it the duty of constables to come and see how we manage our . . ." "I don't know," said the Provost, interrupting her to tell her what had happened to him. "And so you've seen one of the ladies of the court without my permission. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!" She began to wail and groan and cry so wretchedly and so loudly that the Provost did not know what to do. "What's the matter, darling? What do you want? What is it?" "Ah, you won't love me any more, now that you have seen how the Court ladies are." "Tut, tut, my dear. They are great ladies—I don't mind telling you in confidence—they are great ladies in every respect." "Well," said she, smiling, "am I better?" "Oh," said he, quite dazzled, "there is quite a big difference." "They must be very happy then," she said sighing, "since I get such a lot of pleasure out of so little."

Then the Provost tried a better argument to argue with his wife, and argued to such good effect that in the end she was quite convinced that, as God had ordained, there is great pleasure to be derived from small things.

This shows that nothing on earth can prevail against the church of the Holy Scriptures.



*The story of the Monk Amador
who was a glorious Abbot of
Turpenay*

On one of those drizzly days when the ladies gladly stay indoors, because they like damp weather, and can have the men they like close about them, the Queen was in her room in the castle of Amboise. She was sitting in her chair by the curtained window, working at a piece of tapestry by way of amusement, but plying her needle absent-mindedly, and gazing dreamily out at the rain that was falling on the River Loire, and not saying a word; and her ladies were following her example. The good King was chatting with those of his Court who had accompanied him back from the chapel, where he had attended Sunday vespers. When he had finished walking up and down and talking, he noticed the Queen, and saw that she was frowning, and that her ladies were too; and he observed that all of them were acquainted with the mysteries of matrimony.

"Did I not see my lord Abbot of Turpenay here?" he asked.

At these words there approached the King the monk who had so importuned King Louis the Eleventh by his petitions at law that the King had strictly commanded the Provost of his Household to keep him out of his sight. It has been related in the first volume of these Tales how the monk was saved through the mistake of Lord Tristan.

At this time the monk was a man whose qualities had developed so greatly that his humour had come out in the vivid colouring of his face. He was much liked by the ladies, who stuffed him with wines, cakes, and dainties at the dinners, suppers and parties to which they invited him, for all hosts are fond of these cheerful guests from God, who are clever enough to talk and eat at the same time. This Abbot was a mischievous gossip who, under cover of his cloth, would often tell the ladies a racy story, which made them

from, but only after the hearing, for before you can judge you need first to be told.

"Reverend father," said the King, "it is now dusk, when feminine ears may be regaled with some amusing tale of adventure, for the ladies can laugh without blushing, or blush as they laugh, as they like. Tell us a good story; I mean a monk's story. I should very much like to hear one, for I want to be amused, and so do the ladies." "We shall only submit to this because it is your Majesty's pleasure," said the Queen, "for the lord Abbot is sometimes inclined to go a little too far." "Very well," said the King, turning to the monk, "read us some Christian homily, father, so that my lady may be amused."

"Sire, my eyes are dim, and night is falling." "Tell us a tale, then, that stops at the waist." "Ah, Sire," said the monk smiling, "the one I have in mind stops there, but it begins at the feet."

The lords present besought and pleaded with the Queen and her ladies so gallantly, that, true Bretonne as she was, she bestowed a gracious smile upon the monk.

"Proceed, father," said she; "but you must answer to God for our sins." "With pleasure, my lady; and if you care to exchange yours for mine, I don't think you will be the loser!"

They all laughed at this, including the Queen herself. The King came and set next to his dear wife whom he deeply loved, as everyone knows. Then the courtiers were given permission to sit down—the old lords, I mean, of course, for the young ones leaned, by permission of the ladies, on the edge of their chairs, so that they might laugh without disturbing the company. Then the Abbot of Turpenay decked the following tale out nicely for them, letting his voice glide like wind in a flute as he passed by its not so clean passages.

"A hundred years ago, or more, mighty quarrels broke out in Christendom, because two Popes appeared in Rome, each one claiming to be lawfully elected. This was most unfortunate for the monasteries, abbeys, and episcopal sees; for the question being who

should receive widest recognition, each of the two Popes granted rights to his own adherents, and that led to duplication everywhere. In these circumstances the monasteries or abbeys which were at war with their neighbours could not recognise both Popes, and each found itself getting baulked by the other Pope's decision in favour of the enemies of the Chapter. This unfortunate schism caused all kinds of mischief, which abundantly shows how there is no more malevolent plague in Christendom than adultery within the Church.

"Well, at this time, when the devil was causing such havoc among our possessions, the famous Abbey of Turpenay, of which I now am the unworthy governor, was prosecuting a weighty claim concerning certain rights against the dreaded, miscreant, idolatrous, heretical, apostate, and wicked lord of Candé. This child of the devil, who walked the earth in the shape of a lord was, to tell the truth, a fine soldier, a favourite at Court, and the friend of Sir Bureau de la Rivière, much cherished servant of King Charles the Fifth of glorious memory. Taking advantage of Sir Bureau's favour, the lord of Candé, fearing no punishment, granted himself licence to do exactly as his fancy took him in the poor valley of the Indre, which he had all to himself from Montbazon to Ussé. You can well imagine that his neighbours all went in terror of him, but rather than come to blows with him, they let him have his own way. All the same they would much rather have seen him under the ground than above it, and they sincerely wished him ill—which did not worry him in the least. In the whole valley the noble Abbey alone held its own against him, for it has always been the Church's doctrine to gather the weak and needy into its fold, and try to defend the oppressed, especially when its rights and privileges are threatened. This rough warrior had a mortal hatred of all monks, especially those of Turpenay, who would not let him deprive them of their rights by force, cunning, or any other means. You can guess how pleased he was at the schism in the Church, and he watched to see which Pope our Abbey would choose, waiting for a chance to despoil her, since he was ready to recognize the one to whom the Abbot of Turpenay would refuse obedience. Since his

return to his castle he had adopted the habit of tormenting and torturing the priests whenever he met them on his estates. There was one poor friar, who was caught unawares on his lordship's road bordering the stream, and could think of no other means of escape than to jump into the river, where, by a special miracle of God, whom the good man fervently invoked, his frock held him up upon the water, and he drifted safely over to the other bank which he reached in full view of the lord of Candé, who was not ashamed to scoff at the plight of one of God's servants. That was the sort of man he was.

"The Abbot who was at the head of our glorious Abbey at that time, led a most holy life, and prayed to God devoutly, but he would have saved his own soul ten times over, so sincere was his faith, rather than try to find means of saving the Abbey from the depredations of this fiend. Although the old Abbot was sore perplexed and saw that disaster was coming upon them, he trusted in God to help them, saying that He would never allow any harm to come to the property of His Church; and that He who had raised up Judith to the Hebrews and Queen Lucretia to the Romans would vouchsafe help to His most illustrious Abbey of Turpenay; and therewithal made wise remarks of the same kind. But his monks—who, I must admit, were a faithless lot—reproached him for his heedlessness, and said that, on the contrary, every ox in the province must be harnessed to Providence's chariot, to make sure that it would arrive in good time; that the trumpets of Jericho were no longer made in any part of the world, and that God had had so much trouble with His creation that He had ceased to bother about it; in short, a thousand and one worldly-wise notions that were an insult and affront to God. A certain monk of the name of Amador was extremely upset by his unhappy state of affairs. He had been given this name in fun, because he looked exactly like the heathen god Egipan. Like him he was big-bellied, and had bandy legs, and strong, hairy arms like a hangman's, a back made to carry a heavy load, a red drunkard's face, wild eyes, an unkempt beard, and bald head, and he was so indulging with fat and food that you would have thought him great

with child. You may be sure that he chanted matins on the steps of the wine-cellar, and said vespers in the Lord's vineyards. More often than not he lay on his back like a beggar covered with sores, wandered through the valley dawdling, fooling away his time, giving his blessing at weddings, shaking bunches of grapes off the vines, watching the girls wringing their washing--all despite the lord Abbot's prohibition. In a word, he was a wicked, pilfering dawdling soldier in the ecclesiastical militia, to whom no one at the Abbey paid any attention, but allowed to go idle out of Christian charity, for they all thought that he was mad.

"Amador, knowing that the Abbey, in which he was as happily ensconced as a boar in his sty, was in danger, bestirred himself, went about everywhere, into every cell, listened to the conversation in the refectory, smacked his lips with excitement, and declared that he was going to try to save the Abbey. He found out all about the matters contested, obtained the lord Abbot's licence to compound the lawsuit, and the whole Chapter promised him the vacant sub-priorship, if he brought the litigation to a close. Then he set off into the country, not worrying in the least about the cruel and wicked behaviour of the lord of Candé, saying that he had something under his frock which would overpower the fellow. And so he set out on foot, with no resources but his frock, which, you must know, was greasy enough to feed a Minim friar. He chose to go to the castle on a day when it rained enough to fill the pails of all the housewives roundabout, and he reached Candé without meeting a soul, looking like a drowned rabbit; he slipped bravely into the courtyard, took shelter under a roof to wait until the violence of the weather abated, and took up his position fearlessly in front of the room in which the lord of Candé should be. A servant, who was serving at supper, noticed him and took pity on him, and told him to be off, or the lord would give him a hundred lashes with his whip, just to start the conversation; and he asked him what made him so bold as to enter a house where monks were more hated than red leprosy.

"'Oh,' said Amador, 'I am on my way to Tours, where my lord

Abbot has sent me. If my lord of Candé were not so evilly disposed towards God's poor servants, I should not be in his courtyard in such a downpour, but in his house. I hope that he may find mercy when his last hour comes.'

"The servant reported these words to the lord of Candé, who at first was minded to have the monk thrown into the great ditch of the castle among the refuse, like an unclean thing. But the lady of Candé, who had some authority over her lord husband, and was feared by him because he expected great wealth from her inheritance, and because she was inclined to bully him, scolded him, and said that the monk might possibly be a good Christian; that in this torrential weather even robbers would give a serjeant-at-arms shelter; that, besides this, they ought to treat him well so as to find out what was the decision of the monks of Turpenay in the affair of the schism; and that in her opinion it was best to resolve the difficulties which had arisen between the Abbey and the land of Candé by gentle means rather than by force, because there had been no lord since the coming of Christ who had proved himself stronger than the Church, and that sooner or later the Abbey would ruin the castle; in conclusion, she poured forth a multitude of wise arguments, as ladies do when the storms of life wax fiercest, and they have had about enough of it. Amador cut such a sorry figure, and was evidently so wretched and such fair game, that the lord, who was in a melancholy mood because of the rain, thought that he would make fun of him and torment him, rinse his glass out with vinegar, and give him a lively recollection of his reception at the castle. And so the lord, who had secret dealings with his wife's serving-maid, sent this girl, whose name was Perrotte, to carry out his evil intentions against poor Amador. So when they had concocted a plot between them, the good girl, who, to please her master, hated all monks, came to the monk, who was in the pigsty, looking as affable as possible so as to take him in more completely.

'Father,'" she said, "the lord of this place is ashamed to leave a servant of God out in the rain when there is room indoors, a good

fire beneath the mantelshelf, and the table laid. I invite you, in his name and in that of the lady of the castle, to come inside.' "

"I thank my lady and lord, not for their hospitality, which is a Christian thing, but for sending as their legate to me, poor sinner that I am, so dainty and beautiful an angel that my eyes seem to behold the Virgin upon our altar.' "

As he said this, Amador lifted up his nose and kindled the pretty maid with two sparks from his bright eyes; whilst she, for her part, did not find him so very ugly or filthy or beastly. As he climbed the steps with Perrotte, Amador received across his nose, mouth, and other parts of his face, a lash from a whip which made him see all the candles of the *Magnificat*, so truly did the lord of Candé administer it as he chastened his hounds, pretending not to see the monk. He begged Amador to forgive him, and chased away the dogs, which had knocked his guest over. The merry wench, who knew exactly what was going on, had cleverly stepped aside. Amador noticed all this, and suspected collusion between the knight and Perrotte and between Perrotte and the knight—perhaps he may have heard something about them from the girls of the valley when he chatted to them at the washing places.

"None of the people who were then in the hall made way for the man of God, and he stood freezing in the draught between the door and the window, until the moment when the lord of Candé, my lady his wife, and his aged sister Mademoiselle de Candé, governess to the young heiress of the house, who was about sixteen years of age came in. They sat down at the head of the table, far from their household, according to the usual custom of the time which the lords had adopted to their discredit. The lord of Candé, who had altogether forgotten the monk, let him sit down in a corner at the lower end of the table, where two mischievous boys had been told off to torment him. Indeed the two servants, just like torturers, set to pinching his feet, body, and arms, put white wine into his goblet by way of water, to fuddle his brain and get more fun out of him; but they made him drink seven jugfuls without his nodding, belching, hiccupping, or passing wind or water, which astounded

them not a little, especially as his eye remained bright as glass. However, encouraged by a look from their lord, they carried on threw gravy into his beard as they bowed before him, and wiped it away just to have a chance of tugging it violently. Then the scullion who was serving the soup upset it all over his head, and saw to it that the burning liquid trickled down poor Amador's spine; but he endured it all meekly, for the spirit of God was upon him, and also, believe me, the hope that he would end the litigation if he stood his ground at the castle.

"Nevertheless, the crowd broke out into such mocking laughter and ribaldry at the greasy baptism which the cook's son had given to the thirsty monk, whose funnel the cellarman said he had tried to stop up, that the lady of Candé could not fail to notice what was going on at the lower end of the table. The chatelaine then noticed Amador, who, with a look of perfect resignation, was mopping his face and trying to get the better of a great beef-bone which had been put on to his pewter platter. At this moment the good monk, who had deftly struck a blow with his knife at a great villainous bone, took it in his two hairy hands, broke it clean in half, sucked its hot marrow, and found it tasted good.

" 'Well,' said my lady of Canté to herself, 'God has certainly put His strength into this monk.' At this thought she rounded upon the pages, servants, and others, and told them to stop tormenting the friar, who had just been served with a lot of rotten apples and maggotty nuts. But he, seeing that the old aunt and her pupil, the lady and the waiting-maids, had watched him dealing with the bone, turned up his sleeve, showed them the triple sinews of his arm, placed the nuts at the wrist upon the bifurcation of the veins, and crushed them one by one by striking them with the palm of his hand so vigorously that they seemed like ripe medlars. Then he crunched them between his dog-white teeth—husk, shell, fruit, and all—and in no time he had reduced these to a liquid mash which he swallowed like honey wine. When the apples were all that remained in front of him, he quickly snapped each one between his two fingers, using them as scissors to cut them clean. You can

imagine that the womenfolk kept quiet, that the servants thought that the devil was in this monk, and that, but for his wife and the blackness of the night, my lord of Candé would like to have thrown him out for great fear of God. Indeed everybody felt that this monk was quite capable of throwing the castle itself into the moat. "And so, when every man had wiped his lips, the lord of Candé took care to imprison this devil, whose strength was so dangerous to behold; and he had him led to a foul, stinking den, where Perrotte had prepared some schemes to worry him through the night. The tom-cats of the manor had been asked to make him hear their confession, urged on to tell him their sins by catmint, which rouses their desires. The swine, too, had great dishfuls of tripe placed under the bed for them, so that they should be deterred from becoming monks, as they wished, by the *libera* which the monk would chant them. On top of this, at every movement that poor Amador made, he would find horse-hair clippings in the sheets, and bring down a shower of cold water on to the bed; and a thousand other tricks were arranged, such as are usually practised in castles.

"Everyone was soon in bed, waiting for the monk's midnight revels, certain that they would not be disappointed, since he had been lodged under the eaves at the top of a tower, whose lower door had been carefully committed to the keeping of dogs that howled after him. So as to find out what language the monk would use in holding converse with the cats and the swine, the lord came to spend the night with his darling Perrotte, who slept in the next room.

"When the good Amador saw how he was being treated, he drew a knife from his bag and cunningly unbolted his door. Then he stood on the watch, studying the lay-out of the castle; and heard the lord laughing with his wench. Now, suspecting their manoeuvres, he waited until the lady of the house should be alone between her sheets, and went down to her room barefoot, so that his sandals should know nothing of his secrets. He appeared to her in the glow of the lamp in the way in which monks make their appearance by night, which is in a wondrous state, difficult for laymen to keep

up any length of time, since it is due to the frock, which magnifies everything. Then, when he had let her see that he was truly a monk, he gently spoke to her as follows :

"God save you, Madam. You must know that I am sent by Jesus and the Virgin Mary to warn you that you must put an end to the foul perversities that are being practised to the detriment of your virtue. You are being treacherously cheated of all that is best in your husband, and he bestows it instead upon your maid. What is the use of your being the lady, if the manorial dues are collected elsewhere? As far as this goes, your maid is the lady, and you are the serving-maid. Are not all the pleasures that this wench enjoys yours by right? And you will find them all stored up in our Holy Church, which is the consolation of the afflicted. Behold in me her messenger, ready to pay these dues, unless you want to renounce them.' Saying this, the good monk loosened his girdle a little, for it was embarrassing him, so stirred was he at the sight of the lovely things which my lord of Candé disdained. 'If you speak truth, Father, I shall follow your advice,' said she, jumping nimbly out of bed. 'You must indeed be a messenger from God, since in one lay you have seen what I have never noticed in this house all this long time.'

"She then joined Amador, taking care just to brush against his holy robe; and she was so profoundly impressed to find that it was genuine, that she quite hoped to catch her husband in the act. And indeed she did overhear him talking about the monk as he lay in her maid's bed. When she discovered this treachery she went into a fury and opened her mouth to express herself in words, according to the characteristic way of women; and she would have made the devil's own shindy before handing the girl over to justice. But Amador told her she would be wiser to take vengeance first and to shout afterwards.

" 'Revenge me quickly, then, Father,' said she, 'so that I may be able to cry out.' So the monk revenged her in true monastic fashion, a downright, copious revenge, to which she gave herself up as unreservedly as a drunkard when he puts his lips to the tap of the

cask; for when a lady takes her revenge, she must make herself drunk with it or not taste it at all. And the chatelaine was so thoroughly revenged that she could not move; for nothing is more agitating, breath-taking, and altogether exhausting than anger or vengeance. However, though she was revenged, and revenged superlatively, revenged a hundred-fold, she still would not express her forgiveness, because she wanted to retain the right to take her revenge again and again with this monk whenever she liked.

"When he saw this love of revenge, Amador promised to assist her in her vengeance as long as her anger should last; for he confessed that in his capacity of a friar constrained to meditate upon the nature of things, he knew an infinite number of modes, methods, and fashions of achieving revenge. Then he taught her canonically how Christian it is to revenge oneself, for the reason that throughout the Holy Scriptures God prided Himself, above all other qualities, on being a revengeful God; and He has given us abundant proof, in respect of Hell, of the sovereign divinity of revenge, for His vengeance is eternal. Whence it follows that women and monks must revenge themselves, under penalty of not being Christians and faithful observers of the heavenly doctrines. This dogma gave the lady such infinite pleasure that she confessed she had never understood the Church's commandments before at all; and she begged her well-beloved monk to come and teach her these things thoroughly.

"Then the chatelaine, whose spirits had been restored by this refreshing vengeance, went into the room where the slut was frolicking, and chanced to find her with her hand where the good chatelaine often kept her eye, as merchants do on their precious commodities, to guard against their being stolen. Here was, as Judge Lizet would have said in a merrier mood, a couple caught 'bed-handed,' and they looked, both of them, sheepish, foolish, and silly. The sight displeased the lady beyond words, and this appeared in her speech, which gushed forth fiercely, like water in her great pond when the sluice was opened. It was like a sermon in three

parts, with a high-pitched musical accompaniment, variations in every key, and double-sharps in plenty.

"Away with virtue, my lord! I have had enough of it. You have proved to me that belief in married fidelity is a mistake. So this is the reason why I have no son! How many children have you put into this communal bake-house, this poor-box, this bottomless alms-purse, this leper's bowl, very cemetery of the house of Candé? I no longer wonder now whether I am barren through a defect in my own nature, or through your fault. I shall leave the wenches to you. For my part, I shall take handsome knights so that we may have an heir. You can produce the bastards, and I'll have the legitimate heirs." "My dear," said the bewildered lord, please do not scream!" "Indeed!" retorted the lady, "I shall scream; and I shall scream so that everybody can hear me, the Archbishop, the Legate, the King, and my brothers, and all of them will avenge me for this infamy." "Do not dishonour your husband." "Is this then dishonour? It is indeed so; but, my lord, it cannot come from you, but from this slut, whom I shall have sewn up in a sack and thrown into the Indre; so will your dishonour be washed away. Adieu, there!" cried she.

"Be silent, my lady," said the lord, shamefaced as a blind man's dog; for this great warrior, who was so eager to murder others, was like a little child under his lady's gaze, which is a regular thing among soldiers, because strength and the crude force of matter reside in them, whereas, in women, on the contrary, there is a subtlety of mind and a breath of the perfumed flame that illumines paradise, and this always leaves men tongue-tied. This, too, is why some wives rule their husbands, since mind is lord over matter." At this, the ladies burst out laughing, and so did the King.)

"I shall not be silent," said my lady of Candé,"—the Abbot continuing his tale,—"this is too great an insult! Such is then the price that you pay for all my lands, and for my chaste behaviour! Have you ever refused to obey you, even despite Lent and fasting-days? Am I not cool enough to freeze the sun? Do you think I do things by force, out of duty, or just out of kindness? Am I consecrated

underneath? Am I a holy shrine? Did you need a writ from the Pope to enter? In heaven's name, are you so thoroughly used to me that I bore you? Haven't I always behaved to your taste? Do wenches know more about these things than ladies? Oh, this much no doubt is true, that she has let you till her ground without sowing it. Teach me this trade, and I will practise it with those whom I shall take into my service; for, as I have already said, I am free. And that is as it should be. Your society was wearisome, and you made me pay too dearly for my wretched mouthful of fun. Thank God I am quit of you and your fancies, for I am going to retire into a convent of monks. . . .'

"She meant to say 'of nuns,' but the avenging monk had perverted her tongue. ' . . . And I shall be better off with my daughter in a convent than in this abominable sink of depravity. You will have your wench's inheritance. Ha, ha, a fine lady of Candé she'll make!' 'What is the matter?' said Amador, suddenly making his appearance on the scene. 'The matter is, father,' she replied, 'that there is something going on here which cries out for vengeance. To begin with, I am going to have this strumpet sewn up in a sack and thrown into the river, for having diverted the seed of the house of Candé from its proper path; it will save the hangman a job. As for the rest, I will . . .'

"'Give over your anger, my daughter,' said the monk. 'The Church in the *Pater noster* bids us forgive the trespasses of others against ourselves, if we are mindful of heaven; because God forgives them that have also forgiven others. God only takes eternal vengeance upon the wicked who have revenged themselves, but He keeps them that have forgiven in His Paradise. Whence comes the Jubilee, which is a day of great joy, in that debts and trespasses are remitted. It is therefore a delight to forgive. Forgive, forgive! Forgiveness is a sacrosanct deed. Forgive my lord of Candé, who will bless you for your gracious mercy, and love you dearly from this day forth. That act of forgiveness will restore to you the flowers of youth. And believe me, dear, young, and beautiful lady, that forgiveness is sometimes a way to revenge oneself. Forgive

your waiting-maid, who will pray God for you. And thus God, entreated by all, will have you in His keeping, and for this pardon will vouchsafe you a line of male descendants.'

"Having spoken, the monk took the lord's hand, placed it in his lady's, and added: 'Go and talk this pardon over!' Then he slipped these words of wisdom into the lord's ear: 'My lord, use your best argument, and you will silence her with it, for a woman's mouth is full of words only when she is empty elsewhere. And go on arguing, for you will always get the better of your wife in that way.'

"By Jove! there is some good in this monk after all,' said the lord, as he withdrew.

"When Amador saw that he was alone with Perrotte, he spoke to her as follows: "'You are to blame, my dear, for trying to torment a poor servant of God; therefore the anger of heaven hangs over you, and it will fall upon you wherever you may hide; it will ever pursue you and will take hold of you in all your joints, even after your death, and it will bake you like a pie in the bakehouse of hell, where you will seethe eternally; and every day you will receive seven hundred thousand million lashes for the one I received with your knowledge.'

"O, Father!' said the wench, throwing herself at the monk's feet, 'you alone can save me; for, if I donned your good frock, I should be sheltered from God's anger.' Saying which, she lifted up his robe, as if to see where she could hide herself, and exclaimed: 'Upon my word! monks be finer men than knights.' 'By the devil's own jade! have you never seen nor felt a monk?' 'No,' said the wench. 'And you know nothing of the service which monks sing without uttering a word?' 'No,' said Perrotte.

"The monk then showed her this in the proper way, as on high-Festival days, with the full chimes customary in monasteries, psalms well chanted in F major, flaming candles, and choirboys; and he explained the Introit to her, and also the *Ita missa est*; and then he left her so sanctified about that God's anger could have found

no part of the girl which had not been most thoroughly monasticated.

"At his command Perrotte led him to the room where lay Mademoiselle de Candé, the lord's sister, to whom he appeared in order to learn whether it was her good pleasure to make confession to him, since monks rarely came to the castle. This lady was content like any good Christian to have a chance of washing her conscience clean, and poor Mademoiselle, having let him see what the monk had told her was the conscience of a woman, he found it very black, and told her that all women's sins were committed there; that to be sinless in future, she must needs plug her conscience with a monk's indulgence. When the good but ignorant lady replied that she knew not where such indulgence might be obtained, the monk told her that he carried a treasure-box of indulgence, there being nothing more indulgent than that, since it made no sound and gave infinite comfort, which is the true, eternal, and foremost characteristic of indulgence. The poor lady's sight was so dazzled by this treasure, of which she had been wholly deprived, that her brain became confused, and she was so eager to believe in the monk's relic, that she religiously indulged in these indulgences, as my lady of Candé had indulged in vengeance. This confession wakened the little heiress of Candé, who came to see. Note that the monk had looked forward to this encounter, for the thought of this lovely fruit had made his mouth water; and he swallowed it whole, because good Mademoiselle de Candé could not prevent him giving a remnant of indulgence to the girl, who desired it so. You must admit that for his pains he deserved this joy.

"Morning having come round, the swine having eaten all that was in their dishes, the cats having disenamoured themselves by dint of making water over every spot which had been rubbed with herbs, Amador went and lay down in his bed, which Perrotte had cleared of its tricks and gadgets; and everyone, thanks to the monk, slept so long, that no one got up in the castle before noon, which was dinner-time. The servants all thought the monk was a devil, and that he had carried off the cats, the swine, and their masters also.

he heard this, the Abbot summoned them all into the chapel to pray to God to sustain His devoted servant in his torment.

"The monk, having supped, put his charter in his girdle and expressed his desire to return to Turpenay. Then he found my lady's palfrey at the foot of the steps, bridled, saddled, and held ready by the squire. The lord had also commanded his men-at-arms to accompany the good monk, so that no evil should befall him. Seeing this, Amador forgave them the misdeeds of the night before, and gave his blessing to all, before leaving the converted household. You can imagine how my lady followed him with her eyes, declaring him to be a good horseman. Perrotte said that for a monk he held himself more erect on horseback than any of the men-at-arms. Mademoiselle de Candé sighed. The young mistress wanted to have him as her confessor. 'He has hallowed the castle,' they all cried when they were again in the hall.

"When Amador's cavalcade came to the gateway of the Abbey, a scene of terror ensued, for the gate-keeper believed that the lord of Candé, his appetite for monks whetted by poor Amador's decease, had come to sack the Abbey of Turpenay. But Amador called out in his great voice, and was recognized. Then he was let into the courtyard; and, when he alighted from my lady's palfrey, there was a cry fit to frighten the monks as much as an April moon. They gave shouts of joy in the refectory, and all came out to congratulate Amador, who was brandishing the charter. The men-at-arms were regaled with the best wine in the cellar, which had been presented to the monks of Turpenay by those of Marmoustier, to whom the estates of Vouvray belong. The good Abbot, who had had the lord of Candé's communication read to him, went about saying: 'In these manifold contingencies the finger of God is manifest, and to Him it behoves us to render thanks.' As the good Abbot was always coming back to this finger of God in thanking Amador, the monk began to grumble at hearing his dodrantal limb thus belittled, and said to him: 'Let us call it His arm, Father, and say no more about it.'

"The termination of the suit between the lord of Candé and the Abbey of Turpenay was followed by a happy event which made

him most devoted to our Church, because a son was born to him when the ninth month fell due. Two years later Amador was elected Abbot by the monks, who reckoned on having some fun with him in charge. But Amador, when he was made Abbot, became wise and austere, because he had tamed his evil propensities by his exertions and recast his nature in the female forge, wherein burns a fire which can clarify all things, for this fire is the most perdurable, persevering, persistent, perfectionate, pereurrent, peremptory, perscrutative and perineal thing in the world. It is a fire that is all-consuming, and it consumed the bad in Amador so thoroughly that it left him only with what it could not bite, to wit, his mind. This became as bright as a diamond, which, as everyone knows, is residue of the great fire that reduced our world to cinders long ago. Amador was thus the instrument elected by Providence to reform our illustrious Abbey; for he readjusted everything, watched night and day over his monks, made them all rise at the hours appointed for the services, counted them in chapel as a shepherd counts his sheep, kept them on the leash, and punished their offences so severely that he made them all into very well-behaved monks.

"This teaches us that when we devote ourselves to women it should be to chastise ourselves rather than for the pleasure that we get out of it. The story of this adventure shows us very clearly that it never does to battle with the servants of Holy Church."

The King and Queen found this tale in excellent taste; the courtiers then acknowledged that they had never heard one more amusing, and all the women would have liked to have taken part in it.

